Story of the Sun A Look at Imam al-Ridha Life

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Translator(s): Ahmad Rezwani

بسم الله الرحمن الرحیم

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A brief account on the life and attributes of Eighth Holy Imam: 'Ali Ibn Musa al-Ridha ((as

Preface

Ahl al-Bayt (a.s.) are the treasure-keepers of knowledge. The rivers and streams of knowledge, which have inundated and refreshed the farms of human souls in the past fourteen centuries, have originated from the heavenly pinnacles of this mountain of

light. ‘Ali (a.s.), the Imam of the learned and the mystics said, “The flood water [of ”.knowledge] flows down from me and no bird [flight of mind] can soar up to me

The prosperity and freshness of the land of knowledge and awareness is because of the glittering radiance of this Household’s divine knowledge; as the Great Prophet (S) ”.said, “I am the city of knowledge and ‘Ali is its gate

The Ahl al-Bayt’s (a.s.) knowledge is of perceptive rather than learnable type, and this is because they have perceived the truth of knowledge by their heavenly souls. Imam ‘Ali (a.s.) describes mystics (of whom he is the master) as: “Knowledge has led them to ”.real understanding, so they have associated themselves with spirit of conviction

The Great Prophet (S) was the original founder of

this dynasty of light and luminescence, and although unschooled, his message was .knowledge and his mission was recitation and reading, erudition, and awareness

His mission started with iqra’ (recite), and continued with knowledge and insight, .which filled up souls with rapture and bliss

It is He who sent to the unlettered [people] an apostle from among themselves, to recite to them His signs, to purify them, and to teach them the Book and .wisdom.)Qur’an: ۶/۶۰

With his prophetic mission, he led the dead souls out of their mundanity and misguidance into the heavenly gardens of life and livelihood; and called the mankind gone astray and lost in the crooked roads of corruption to the highways of guidance :and straight path and breathed a new soul into mankind’s dead body

.when he summons you to that which will give you life.Qur’an: ۸/۲۸...

He relieved them of the heavy burdens of ignorance

and relieves them of their burdens and the shackles that were upon them. Qur’an:... .۷/۱۵۷

Having drunk their fill from his fountain of life, the household of his Holiness, like him, held up the torches of knowledge and awareness aflame and radiant to the seekers of knowledge and spiritual insight over the centuries; and with the aid of his Divine Lights, illuminated the way for seekers and made their souls radiant and replete with .celestial splendor

And today, in the age of modern paganism, what settles down the dust from the path before the perfection-seekers and can illuminate their way is the

return to the fountainhead of that same knowledge and spiritual insight that the great Prophet (S) and his holy and pure Household presented to mankind. Perhaps today, more than ever before, human beings are in dire need of what the Prophet of mercy .presented to humanity

There is no doubt that delving into the Ahl al-Bayt's (a.s.) fountainheads of light and re-reading the life-story (sira) and teachings of those noble figures in our days – like in all eras – is a great service to humanity, which is incomparable to any other .services

Therefore, it is incumbent on all those whose hearts throb for human beings that by mulling over and delving into the Ahl al-Bayt's (a.s.) Gnostic knowledge, to extract the pure pearls and liberating doctrines of this splendid Divine treasure and present them .to the contemporary desperately sorrowful and thirsty mankind

We are duty-bound, as neighbors to the Holy Shrine of the learned one of the Prophet's household [Imam 'Ali b. Musa al-Ridha (a.s.)], to wish prosperity and best of health for all the followers of this path and all those who make endeavors in revitalizing directives of Ahl al-Bayt (a.s.) and their divine teachings and knowledge, particularly the noble and esteemed authors who have contributed to the writing and compilation of this precious collection, and pray for their success from the All-Knowing .and Ever-Living Allah

Also, we ask the respected pilgrims to transform the unique opportunity of paying (pilgrimage to the blessed body of the progeny of Rasul Allah (S

into a chance for fulfilling their spiritual and intellectual requirements through enjoyment of the thoughts, words, and life history of that magnanimous Imam; and by studying valuable works such as the present collection, to store up provisions of bliss and perfection for their present world and Hereafter, remembering to pray for .their servants in this Holy Sanctuary, as well

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Introduction

Islamic Iran is proud to host the blessed body of the Apostle of Allah (S)'s progeny, Imam al-Ridha (a.s.), the learned of the Prophet's household, the source of blessings, and the eighth infallible Imam. Each year it receives millions of eager and enamored .pilgrims who come here to pay homage to the affectionate and gracious Imam

With the blessings of this benevolent Imam, divine graces are dispensed to all devotees of Ahl al-Bayt (a.s.), especially to the followers and Shi'as of his holiness; and this piece of land in Khurasan is a piece of paradise which prides itself on the world of angels and is ever the focus of attention to the heavenly cherubim, just as it is a focus of attention and guidance for the people of the world. Divine angels frequent around .the sacred mausoleum along with his earnest pilgrims

And what great blessings and graceful effects has the Almighty God imparted on .behalf of this magnanimous Imam and his pilgrimage to his pilgrims and enthusiasts

Paying pilgrimage to Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) and the torrential presence of the pilgrims in his heavenly sanctuary does always

strengthen religious spirit and spirituality, and the remembrance of the Hereafter, concentration on Almighty Allah and His ordinances in the hearts of people and the .Islamic society

In that pure atmosphere radiating with the light of Imamate and wilaya, the eager pilgrims feel peace and purity of the heart, express their needs, and enjoy plenty of .divine blessings through the noble Imam

Thus, in order to provide better and deeper enjoyment of this pilgrimage, we would draw the attention of the interested pilgrims to a brief account of that noble Imam's precious life and attributes so that they may go on pilgrimage with more knowledge and, thereby, receive more divine blessings and attention from the Eighth Holy Imam .'Ali b. Musa al-Ridha upon whom be thousands of salutations and praises

Brief History of Imam al-Ridha's (a.s.) Life

point

His blessed name: 'Ali

(.His father's name: Imam Musa b. Ja'far (a.s

His mother's name: Najma or Tuktam

His nickname: Abu al-Hasan

His cognomen: Ridha

Date of birth: Dhu'l-Qa'da ۱۱, ۱۴۸/Dec ۲۹, ۷۶۵

Place of birth: Holy city of Medina

Progeny: His holiness Imam Muhammad Taqi (a.s.); of course, it is disagreed whether .his holiness has had other children

Rulers of his time: Mansur Dawaniqi, Mahdi 'Abbasi, Hadi 'Abbasi, Harun al-Rashid, Muhammad Amin, Ma'mun 'Abbasi

Date of being appointed as heir apparent: Ramadhan, ۲۰۱/March, ۸۱۷, as imposed by Ma'mun

Length of life: ۵۵

Date of martyrdom: the end of Safar, ۲۰۳/September ۵, ۸۱۸

His murderer: Ma'mun 'Abbasi, through poisoning

(His mausoleum: Holy city of Mashhad, as known worldwide.(۱

Imam al-Ridha's (a.s.) Date of Birth

Well-known scholars of hadith have regarded his birth date to be ۱۱th of Dhu'l-Qa'da, ,۱۴۸/۲۹th of December

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Adopted from Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۴۹, p. ۲. Of course, concerning the birth and - ۱ .martyrdom of his holiness other views have also been reported

and this is the same year that Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.) departed from this world.(1) ,765
However, some have regarded his holiness' birth to be five years after the demise of (Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.).(2

Imam al-Ridha's (a.s.) Noble Mother

His noble mother was an honorable lady named Najma or Tuktam, who was named (Tahira – the pure one – after her marriage.(3

(She was a chaste(4) and wise lady from among the Persian dignitaries.(5

In a tradition, her highness Tuktam, Imam al-Ridha's (a.s.) Mother, is quoted as saying: "Help me out by a wet nurse (to help me with suckling Ridha). She was asked: "Is the milk reduced?" "No," She answered, "but I have adhkar and supplications to (perform that have been reduced after his birth."(6

Imam al-Ridha's (a.s.) Children

The historians and hadith scholars are divided over the number of Imam al-Ridha's (a.s.) Children; many, like Shaykh al-Mufid(7) and Ibn Shahrashub(8), regard Imam al-Jawad (a.s.) as the only child of Imam al-Ridha (a.s.), but some have assumed him to (have had other children, including a daughter named Fatima.(9

However, some traditions have confirmed the Imam's having had only one child. A man called Hannan b. Sudayr said, I said to Imam al-Ridha (a.s.): Would an Imam be without a son or a successor? His holiness answered: No, and know that there would (be no more than one child for me, but God will grant him many children.(10

The Auspicious Birth of Shams al-Shumus (the Radiant Sun among all the suns), 'Ali b. (.Musa al-Ridha (a.s

His holy mother, Lady Najma when pregnant with her son, 'Ali, said, "I did not feel any heaviness. When asleep, I heard dhikr of God from within

.I‘lam al-Wara, ۳۰۲; Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۴۹, p. ۳ -۱

Uyun Akhbar al-Ridha (a.s.), vol. ۱, p. ۱۸; Muruj al-Dhahab, ۳/۴۴۱, Isbat al-Wasiyya,‘ -۲
.۱۸۲

.Uyun Akhbar al-Ridha (a.s.), vol. ۱, p. ۱۵‘ -۳

.Uyun Akhbar al-Ridha (a.s.), vol. ۱, p. ۱۷‘ -۴

.Ihqaq al-Haqq, ۱۲/۳۴۳ from Yanabi‘ al-Mawadda -۵

.Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۴۹, p. ۲ -۶

.Al-Irshad, vol. ۲, p. ۲۶۳ -۷

.Manaqib, vol. ۴, p. ۳۷۶ -۸

.Muntaha al-Amal, vol. ۲, p. ۳۵۲ -۹

.Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۴۹, p. ۲۲۱ -۱۰

me in a way that I was awe-inspired. After I gave birth to him, he placed his feet and hands on the ground and, raised his head to the sky, and moved his lips, as though he ".was saying something

When his holiness, Imam Musa al-Kazim (a.s.) saw his son, he said, "O Najma! Blessed are you for the miraculous gift Allah granted you." Then, the baby was wrapped in a white piece of cloth and given to his holiness, who recited adhan into his right ear and iqama into his left ear; he asked for some Euphrates water and touched the baby's palate with it [for blessing], and said to his mother: "Take the baby as he is the (remnant of Allah on His earth".(١

After the birth of Imam al-Ridha (a.s.), Imam al-Kazim (a.s.) gave her mother the (nickname Tahira, meaning pure.(٢

(.Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.), Wishing to See Imam al-Ridha (a.s

Hadhrat Musa b. Ja'far (a.s.) would say to his children: "This brother of yours, 'Ali b. Musa is the learned of the Prophet (S)'s household ['Alim-i Al-i Muhammad (S)]; ask him about your religion and learn by heart what he says. I frequently heard from my father, Ja'far b. Muhammad, who told me: "The learned of the Prophet (S)'s household is from among your progeny; I wish I would see him; he has the same name as (Commander of the Faithful, 'Ali (a.s.).(٣

In numerous traditions related from the Holy Prophet (S), Commander of the Faithful, 'Ali (a.s.), and Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.) references have been made to the birth of

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.Uyun Akhbar al-Ridha (a.s.), vol. ٢, p. ٢٥٠' -١

.Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۴٩, p. ٧ -٢

.Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۴٩, p. ١٠٠ from I'lam al-Wara -٣

that magnanimous Imam as well as his tragic martyrdom, his noble mausoleum in Khurasan, and the great reward for paying pilgrimage to him, which will be elaborated .on in the chapter concerning his martyrdom

?Why was Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) Named al-Ridha

Al-Bazanti, one of the dignitaries among the companions of Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) and Imam al-Jawad (a.s.) said, "I said to Abu Ja'far Muhammad b. 'Ali, Imam al-Jawad (a.s.): 'A group of your opponents presume that Ma'mun has given the cognomen al-Ridha to your father since he approved him as his heir apparent.'

Imam al-Jawad (a.s.) said, "By God, they are lying and committing a sin; rather, God, the Blessed and Exalted, named him as al-Ridha since he was approved by the Almighty and Glorious God in Heaven and endorsed by His Messenger and the Imams after him on earth."

"I asked: 'Were all your forefathers not so?' He said, 'Yes.' I asked: 'So, why your father from among them was named al-Ridha?' He answered: 'Since his opponents approved of him, as did his friends; and this did not happen to any of his forefathers. That is why he from among them was named Ridha."

Confirming this issue, Sulayman b. Hafs said, "Musa b. Ja'far named his son al-Ridha and (when he wanted to talk of him) he would say: 'Call my son al-Ridha; I said to my son al-Ridha; my son al-Ridha told me so and so..."(١)

The Childhood and Adolescence Period of Imam al-Ridha (a.s.)

History has largely kept silent about the Imams (a.s.) in their childhood and adolescent period, as the historians are more interested in the

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١- 'Ilal al-Sharayi', vol. ١, p. ٢٢۶.

illustrious events and popular people, rather than the unpretentious people and those who are far from being boisterous and raucous, especially in relation to the Ahl al-Bayt (a.s.) who were intended by the state to be isolated; and the scholars of the time, .out of their religious dissidence, tried to underestimate their role

This has caused the latter generations to remain uninformed of the life of the Ahl al-Bayt (a.s.) before their appointment to Imamate and most probably of the period after .their Imamate

Concerning what is related in history about how greatly his holiness al-Ridha (a.s.) was loved by his noble father, one of the companions of Imam Musa b. Ja'far (a.s.) named al-Mufadhdhal is quoted as saying: "I went to visit his holiness, I saw his son 'Ali was sitting on his lap; the Imam was kissing him and caressing his face, raising him up to :his shoulder, and pressing him to his bosom and saying

May my father be your ransom! How sweet is your scent! How immaculate is your" "!temperament and how evident your excellence

I said, "May I be your ransom! I feel such a love for this child that I have never felt for ".anyone else but you

,His holiness said, "O Mufadhdhal, he is to me like I am to my father; children

some of whom are descendants of the others, and Allah is All-hearing, All-knowing. "Qur'an: ۳/۳۴

I asked: "Will he possess this position after you?" He said, "Yes, whoever obeys him will attain Truth, and whoever

(disobeys him will become an infidel."(1)

And sometimes he would say: "My eldest son, 'Ali, is most of all others submissive and obedient to me. He looks upon Jafr and Jami'a (which are two significant source books of the Ahl al-Bayt [a.s.]'s knowledge) along with me, upon which no one but the (Prophet and his successors would look."(2)

Imam al-Ridha's (a.s.) Religious Authority in His Youth

In his youth, Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) enjoyed such an outstanding virtue and scholarship that people referred to him as a religious authority. Imam al-Kazim (a.s.) referred people to him, saying: "My son's writing is as my writing; his words are as my words, (and his envoy is as my envoy; whatever he says is the very truth."(3)

One day someone said to Imam al-Kazim (a.s.): "I have a question." His holiness said, "Ask it from your Imam." The man asked: "Who do you mean? I know no Imam except you!" His holiness said, "That is my son, 'Ali, I have given my nickname – Abu al-Hasan (– to him!"(4)

Ibn Hajar, a Sunni scholar, said, "Hadhrat Ridha (a.s.), when only twenty and some ".(years old, would give fatwa (legal judgments) in the Mosque of Rasul Allah (S

Dhahabi, another Sunni scholars said, "Hadhrat Ridha (a.s.) would give fatwa in his (youth during the lifetime of Malik b. Anas – one of the four Sunni jurists."(5)

Imam al-Ridha's (a.s.) High Status in the Divine Presence

point

Imam al-Jawad (a.s.) said, "One of the companions of Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) fell sick (lying in his deathbed). His holiness (a.s.) went to visit him and asked him how he was. The man

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.Uyun Akhbar al-Ridha (a.s.), vol. ١, p. ٢۶' -١

۲- Basa’ir al-Darajat, part ۳, chapter ۱۴, vol.۲۴, p.۲۰.

۳- Usul al-Kafi, ۱/۳۱۲; ‘Uyun Akhbar al-Ridha (a.s.), ۱/۳۱; Al-Irshad, ۲/۲۵۰.

۴- Tahdhib al-Tahdhib, ۷/۳۳۹.

۵- Siyar A‘lam al-Nubala, ۹/۳۸۸.

.answered he was desperately ill, and that he saw death before his eyes

The Imam said, ‘How did you see death?’ He said, ‘Very hard and painful.’ The Imam went on to say: ‘It is the beginning; it [death] has shown you some of its modes. People are of two groups: for one group dying will be a comfort and for the other [when they die] people will be comforted. Renew your faith in God and wilaya (profession of faith in God and His Messenger and devotion to Imams), so that you will ”.be comforted

The man did so, and then said, ‘O son of Rasul Allah (S), now my Lord’s angels are“ saluting you with their greetings and blessings and are standing before you, waiting ”.for your permission to be seated

His holiness said, “O angels of the Lord be seated!” “Then the Imam said to the man: ”?‘Ask the angels if they are ordered to be standing before me

The ailing man asked them and they answered: ‘If all the God’s angels are in your“ presence they would stand before you out of your respect and would not be seated ”.until you permit them to sit; God has ordained them so

Then as the ailing man kept his eyes closed said, ‘Pease be upon you, O Divine envoy!“ It is you who are present to me along with the Holy Messenger (S) and other Imams ((a.s.).’ And thus he left his body.”(۱)

My Son in a Strange Land

Shaykh Saduq (ra) relates that a man from among the pious

p: ۱۱

۱- Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۴۹, p. ۷۲, as claimed by Rawandi.

saw the Prophet (S) in a dream and asked him: "O Rasul Allah! Which of your [grand] sons should I visit?" His holiness answered: "Some of my sons come to me poisoned and some killed." I said, "With such dispersion of their [burial] places, which one should "?I visit

His holiness said, "The one who is nearest to you and is buried in a strange land." I asked: "Do you mean al-Ridha?" The Prophet (S) said, "Say sallallahu 'alayh (may God (bless him), Say sallallahu 'alayh, Say sallallahu 'alayh!"(1)

(.Devotional Sira of Imam al-Ridha (a.s

point

Attending to worship and allocating time to devotional acts and special litanies and supplications during the day and night has been one of the Ahl al-Bayt's (a.s.) regular practices, which, despite people's visiting them and their teaching and various other preoccupations, they have never neglected, and this is a great lesson for their .followers

:Now, part of the Imam al-Ridha's (a.s.) devotional attitude is introduced as follows

.He would prostrate after his morning prayers and stay in prostration until sunrise

When he found a chance and had free time, he would perform a thousand rak'as of .prayers

.After every prayer he would perform a thanksgiving prostration

He was so intimate with the Qur'an that all his sayings and replies and examples were .of a Qur'anic nature

Every three days he would complete the recitation of the whole Qur'an and say: if I wish I would complete it in less than this, but each aya I recite I deliberate on it to see .where and when it was revealed

He slept

.(Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۴۹, p. ۷۲, quoted from ‘Uyun Akhbar al-Ridha (a.s -۱

.little during night and would keep vigil most of the nights

.He would fast a lot, never neglecting the three-days-a-month fasting

He would recite salawat (benediction to the Holy Prophet) in his supplications and would recite it a lot in his prayers and at other times.

He would recite the Qur'an in bed at night and when he came to the verses concerning the Paradise and Hell, he would weep a lot.

All the time he was engaged in remembrance of God and most of all he stood in awe of his Lord.(۱)

Imam al-Ridha's (a.s.) Devotional Schedule in his Journey to Khurasan

Raja' b. Abi Ḍahhak was an administrator of the Abbasid government, who presided over the high council of tax-collection during the reign of Ma'mun. (۲) Having been appointed to take Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) to Ma'mun from Medina to Marv and making sure to choose a route through Basra, Ahwaz, and Fars, rather than through Qum, he said, "I accompanied his holiness from Medina to Marv and I swear by God that I did not see at any time no one like him in piety, excessive remembrance of God, and so awe-inspired by God. He had the habit to keep sitting on his praying place after the Morning Prayer and engage in dhikr of Subhan Allah, Alhamdulillah, Allahu Akbar, La ilaha illa Allah, and reciting salawat to the Holy Prophet and his progeny until the sunrise; then he would prostrate himself and remain in prostration well through the daylight.

.Then, he would raise his head and talk to people and preached to them

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۱- Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۴۹, p. ۹۰-۹۴, collected from among various ahadith.

۲- Lughatnama-yi Dihkhuda, ۲۳/۲۸۶.

Near noon, he would perform ablution again and return to his praying place, recite adhan and iqama, and perform his noon prayer after performing eight supererogatory rak'as prior to noon prayer – in a special procedure as quoted in the .hadith

After prayer, he would recite tasbih (Subhan Allah = Glorious is Allah), tahmid (alhamdulillah = Praise be to Allah), takbir (Allahu Akbar = Allah is the greatest), and tahlil (la ilaha ill Allah = There is no deity but Allah) for a while and then he would go on .prostration and recite hamdan lillah (praise be to Allah) one hundred times

After the sunset, he would perform wudhu (partial ablution), say adhan and iqama, and perform the evening prayer; after that he would recite tasbih, tahmid, takbir, and .tahlil for a time

He would then perform a thanksgiving prostration and after that and without talking to anyone he would perform four supererogatory rak'as after evening prayer along with two final salams (face turned right and then left) and two qunuts (a prayer said .(after the second rak'a with hands raised

Following that, he would engage in after-prayer-supplications (ta'qibat) for a while and then break his fast.(١) Almost one third through the evening, he would stand up and perform his bed-time ('isha'') prayer, then while sitting in his place of prayer, he would say dhikr (remembrance of Allah) and recite hamd and la ilaha ill Allah for a .while and after performing ta'qibat and thanksgiving prostration, he would go to bed

Toward the last

On a trip, he would never fast, but in any city where he made an intention to stay -١ for ten days he would fast during daytime. - Editor

one-third of the night, he would get out of his bed while reciting tasbih, tahmid, takbir, tahlil, and istighfar (asking for God's pardon), brush his teeth, perform wudhu, and perform eleven rak'as of late-night supererogatory prayer (salat al-layl) – in a special procedure as related in the hadith – and after prayer, he would keep sitting to say .ta'qibat and near dawn he would perform two rak'as of dawn supererogatory prayer

At dawn break, he would say adhan (the call to prayer) and iqama (the declaration of standing for prayer). After performing the final Salam (or taslim), he would say .ta'qibat; then, he would perform two thanksgiving prostrations till daybreak

In any city where he made an intention to stay for ten days he would fast during daytime and when night fell, he would say prayers before breaking his fast; and if he did not intend to stay, he would perform the obligatory prayers in two rak'as, except .(for the evening prayer (which is three rak'as

He would never fail to perform the evening supererogatory, late-night supererogatory, and the two rak'as of dawn prayer, neither while travelling nor when staying at home. However, he would give up the daytime – noon and afternoon – supererogatory prayers while on a trip and after any shortened (travel) prayer (salat al-qasr), he would say thirty times the four tasbihats (subhan Allah-i, wa al-hhamduli'Alla-hi, wa la ilaha ill'Allahu, wa Allahu akbar,), and would say: "This is for the ...completion of salat

On a trip, he would

never fast; and in his invocations, he would always recite salawat to the Prophet and .his progeny, repeating this salawat during and after his prayers a lot

At night while in bed, he would read the Qur'an a lot and whenever he reached a verse in the Qur'an in which Paradise of Hell-fire was mentioned, he would weep and .ask Allah for the Paradise and take refuge in Him from the Hell-fire

In all his prayers, his holiness would recite the bismi'Allah (the formula bi'smillah al-al-rahim [= in the name of Allah; the most Merciful, the most Compassionate])rahman .in a loud voice

In any city he entered the people would go to him and ask him about the principal features of their religion and his holiness would answer them, quoting many traditions .from Imam 'Ali (a.s.) and the Apostle of Allah (S) as related through his forefathers

When I took the Imam (a.s.) to Ma'mun and he asked me for his travel report, I recounted his holiness' states to him, he said, 'That is true, o son of Abi Ḍahhak; 'Ali b. Musa is the best among the people of the earth and the most learned and the most devoted among them. Do not tell anyone what you have seen of him because I want his excellences be told in my own words.(۱) And I seek for the help of Allah in my (intention to uplift his value."(۲

Imam al-Ridha's (a.s.) On-Time Prayers

Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) gave great importance to on-time prayer, as it is the secret of consciousness

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.Which is of course a cover-up to conceal his excellences -۱

.Uyun Akhbar al-Ridha (a.s.), vol. ۲, p. ۱۷۸' -۲

and religiosity and a Muslim's devotion to Allah and spiritual matters; and those who are committed to on-time prayer are usually noble and prominent in faith and .spirituality

In a meeting ‘Umran Sabi, the renowned scholar of the time, was talking with Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) and their discourse had reached a sensitive point when all of a sudden the Imam (a.s.), stood up and said to Ma’min – who was watching the debate – that it .was time for prayer

Umran said, “My heart is softened (for accepting Islam), do not interrupt my answer.”‘ (The Imam (a.s.) said, “We will say prayer and come back.”(١

In another hadith, Ibrahim b. Musa says: “I asked something from Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) and he promised to fulfill. Then, one day his holiness set out to visit some of the ‘Alawis. On the way, the time for prayer came; his holiness dismounted the beast and .(we were alone. He told me to call to prayer (chant the adhan

I said, ‘Let's wait for the companions to join us.’ He said, ‘May God bless you with His forgiveness, do not postpone prayer from its due time to a later time for no reason; always perform your prayer on time.’ I chanted the adhan and we performed our prayer. After prayer I said to him: ‘O son of the Prophet! Some time has passed since .you made a promise to me and I am needy

,You are always busy and I rarely have access to you.’ At this time

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.Uyun Akhbar al-Ridha (a.s.), vol. ١, p. ١٣٩‘ -١

Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) touched the ground and picked a gold ingot and said, 'Take this! ".May God bless you, use it and conceal what you just saw

The man said, "That property was so bountiful that I purchased an equivalent of seventy thousand dinars worth of goods and I became the most enriched person in (Khurasan."(١

Imam al-Ridha's (a.s.) Social Sira and his Good Conduct towards People

point

.He would tidy up his appearance when he went to people

.He would never verbally molest anyone

.He would never interrupt anyone

.He would never reject anyone's request if he could grant it

.He would not stretch his feet or lean back before his companion

.He was never seen to laugh boisterously; rather, his laughter was [more like] a smile

.He was interested in scenting himself, especially when among people

He helped out others and gave them alms a lot and he would do this in the dark of the .night

He was very humble. It is related that once in a public bathhouse a man who did not know the Imam told him to rub his back (with a scrubbing glove). His holiness began to rub his back; when people introduced the Imam to him, he got so embarrassed and .apologized but the Imam kept rubbing his back while comforting him

He respected his guests a lot. One day a guest came to him and stayed until night. At this time something went wrong with light in the room; the man wanted to fix the light but the Imam stopped him and fixed it himself and said, "We do not exploit our

.Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۴۹, p. ۴۹; Usul al-Kafi, vol. ۱, p. ۴۰۶, somewhat different and brief -۱

(guest."(1

Imam al-Ridha's (a.s.) Generosity and Munificence

His holiness was unique in his time in generosity and favoring the poor. One year, on the day of 'Arafa (the 9th day of Dhul-Hijjah), he gave away all his property. Fadhl b. Sahl said, "This is damage and loss." His holiness said, "Never consider as a loss what (through which you have obtained reward and magnanimity."(2

One day a man said to his holiness: "Grant me something [proportionate] to your generosity." The Imam (a.s.) replied: "I cannot." The man said, "Then grant me to my generosity". His holiness said, "This I can do." Then, he ordered to give him twenty (thousand dinars.(3

Imam al-Ridha's (a.s.) Special Attention and Favor towards the Needy

One of the issues highly emphasized in Islam is attending to and helping out the needy and fulfilling their requirements, especially when they ask for it. The Qur'anic verses and the Infallible Imam's (a.s.) instructions are replete with assertions on this .issue and expressions of the excellence and manners of serving the needy

A short review of the sira of Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) reveals that his holiness has been .especially favored with serving and helping out the poor

Mu'ammar b. Khallad says: When Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) would start eating food, he would set a bowl next to the table-cloth, pick out the best part of the meal, and order (to give it away to the poor...(4

Al-Bazanti, who was one of the closest companions of Imam al-Ridha (a.s.), says: "In a letter to Imam al-Jawad (a.s.) (who was in Medina), his holiness Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) said, 'O Aba Ja'far, I am informed

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.(Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 49, pp. 90-104 (selected from different traditions -1

.Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۴۹, p. ۱۰۰ -۲

.Ibid -۳

.Bihar al-AnwarBihar, vol. ۴۹, p. ۱۰۰, [related from] Mahasin al-Barqi -۴

that your servants take you out [of house] through the small gate (lest people should ask you for something); that is because of their miserliness that they wish no favor .from you may reach others

I want you, by my right on you, not to leave or enter the house except through the big (main) gate. When you leave, take gold and silver – in dirham and dinar, the currency .of the time – with you and grant it to anyone who would ask for it

Give no less than fifty dinars to any of your uncles who would ask for a favor; it is up to you to give them more. Give no less than twenty five dinars to any of your aunts who would ask for a favor; it is up to you to give them more. By means of this I wish Allah may uplift you; give away [in charity] and do not be apprehensive of the (possessor of the Heaven [and earth] – Allah – for tightness of livelihood.(١

Saving the Face of the Needy

Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) was present in a session and a large group of people were present asking him about legal rulings when all of a sudden a tall swarthy man entered. He greeted and said, "O son of the Prophet (S), I am a lover of you and your forefathers coming for Hajj pilgrimage (from Khurasan); I have run out of foodstuff .and I am desperate

Send me to my hometown if you deem it advisable; when I

.Wasa'il al-Shi'a, vol. ٩, p. ٤٦٣, chapter ٤٣, Kitab al-Zakat, vol. ١ -١

reach my hometown, I will give alms on your behalf for what you will have granted me since I do not deserve being given alms." His holiness said, "Sit down, may God's Mercy be upon you." Then he went on dealing with the people's problems until the .gathering quieted and only three people remained

His holiness asked to leave and went indoor; after a while he returned and without showing up he reached his blessed hand over the door and asked: "Where is that man from Khurasan?" The man said, "Here I am." The holy Imam (a.s.) said, "Take these two hundred dinars and spend on provision for your journey and take care of yourself; and you do not need to give alms on my behalf, either." Get going so as I do .not see you and you do not see me!" And the man left

Then, his holiness came out of the inner house. One of the people present asked him: "May I be your ransom. You granted him such a great favor, then why did you hide your face from him?" His holiness said, "So that I may not see the degradation of request in his face! Have you not heard the Apostle of Allah (S)'s hadith saying? "The one who does a good deed secretly is rewarded as of seventy Hajj pilgrimages! The one who commits a sin overtly is abandoned and the one who commits the sin ".covertly is forgiven

After that, the Imam recited a poem with

the following content: “Whenever I put in a request to Him, I will come back from Him with my honor and face [saved].(1)

Imam al-Ridha‘s (a.s.) Treatment of his Subordinates

One of Imam al-Ridha‘s (a.s.) beautiful and affectionate moral features is his tenderness towards servants and slaves, which, while indicating his extraordinary humility – a common characteristic among Ahl al-Bayt (a.s.) – it also represents the Imam's sublime attentiveness and affection toward the subordinate and the poor.

His holiness paid attention to his servants' acts of devotion and spirituality to the extent that he had appointed someone to wake them up for their late-night supererogatory prayer (salat al-layl).(2)

He cared about the freedom of his slaves, as it is reported: “His holiness has freed a thousand slaves.”(3)

One of the people of Balkh says: “I was in the company of Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) in the journey to Khurasan. One day he spread a tablecloth [to eat] and called all the servants – whatever rank they were – to gather around the tablecloth. I said, ‘May I be your ransom, would that you spread a separate tablecloth for them.’ His holiness said, ‘Verily our Lord is One, our mother is one, our father is one, and the reward goes to actions.”

Among his holiness' most valued features was that he was mindful of the peacefulness of his subordinates at the mealtime. Two of his servants named Yasir and Nadir said, “Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) said to us if we were eating and he came to us, we did not have to stand up and

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١- Manaqib, Ibn Shahrashub, vol. ۴, p. ٣۶٠; Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۴٩, p. ١٠١.

٢- Uyun Akhbar al-Ridha (a.s.), vol. ٢, p. ١٧٨‘.

٣- A‘lam al-Hidaya, p. ٣١.

".should finish our food

Sometimes his holiness would call one of us and when he was told that we were eating, he would say: "Let them finish their food";(١) and sometimes he would care so much for his servants that he would make a morsel with his own hands for them [to eat]. His servant, Nadir, said, "Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) would fix jawzina (= sugared (almond) and give it to me."(٢

Imam al-Ridha's (a.s.) Favor and Grace towards the Shi'a

To the Shi'a, Imam is like a kind father who is constantly seeking his children's goodness and benevolence. Accordingly, Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) said, "The Imam is a kind companion, a compassionate brother and father, and [like] a fostering mother to her little child." And that is why we know Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) as a kind-hearted Imam, .since his holiness is always gracing his Shi'as with his favors

Abd Allah b. Aban, who was favored by Imam al-Ridha (a.s.), said, "I said to his' holiness to pray for me and my family. The Imam (a.s.) said, 'Am I not praying?! I swear by God that your actions are presented and reported to me every day and .night." 'Abd Allah said, "I regarded this issue as exaggerated and was surprised

:His holiness said, 'Have you not read the Book of Allah in which He says

And say, "Go on working: Allah will see your conduct, and His Apostle and the 'faithful".Qur'an: ٩/١٠٥

Then his holiness said, "By God the faithful is 'Ali b. Abi Talib (and his infallible (children)."(٣

A man named Musa b. Sayyar

.Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۴٩, p. ١٠٢ -١
.Ibid, p. ١٠٠ -٢

.Usul Kafi, Kitab al-Hujja, vol.١, p. ٣١٩ -٣

says: “I was in the company of Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) in his journey to Khurasan. As we approached Tus and the walls of the city became visible, I heard the sound of .mourning and lamenting

I followed the sound and found it was a funeral. At this moment, Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) dismounted his horse, went toward the dead body, sympathized with the mourners .and prayed for the dead person

Then he faced me and said, ‘O Musa b. Sayyar, whoever takes part in the funeral of one of our friends; they will be exonerated from sins just like when they were newly .’born with no sins

When the dead body was laid next to the grave, Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) went near, pushed the people aside, put his blessed hand on the chest of the dead man, and said, ‘O so and so, glad tidings of Paradise to you! You will have no fear anymore.’ I said, ‘May I be your ransom! You have not traveled to this land before. How do you know ’?this man

He said, ‘O Musa b. Sayyar, do you not know that the deeds of our Shi‘as are presented to us every morning and evening; we ask Allah’s pardon for any shortcoming that exists in their deeds and request Him to grant them gratitude for the (excellent deeds they have undertaken.”(۱

The Greatness of Imam al-Ridha’s (a.s.) Personality in the Words of Dignitaries

Although the status of Imam al-Ridha’s (a.s.) Imamate suffices to become aware of his sublime position, stating part of the words related in this respect would

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.Manaqib Al-i Abi Talib, vol. ۴, p. ۳۴۱. See: Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۴۹, p.۹۸ -۱

.make a great impression on the public minds

Despite his enmity with Imam al-Ridha (a.s.), the Abbasid Ma'mun, who enjoyed a high status in knowledge and scholarship, has said about Imam al-Ridha (a.s.): "I do not know anyone superior to this man – meaning Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) – on the face of (the earth."(١

Jamal al-Din Ahmad b. Nassaba, also known as Ibn 'Inaba, said, "Imam al-Ridha (a.s.), whose nickname is Aba al-Hasan, was matchless in his own time among the sons of Abu Talib."(٢) And Dhahabi, who is famous for his deviation from Ahl al-Bayt (a.s.), said about Imam al-Ridha (a.s.): "He was chief of Bani Hashim in his own time and the most (forbearing and the wisest of them all..."(٣

As one of the notables of his time, Aba Salt Hirawi said, "I have not seen anyone more knowledgeable than 'Ali b. Musa al-Ridha (a.s.); no scholar saw his holiness unless he (would confirm this same witness of mine..."(۴

Abu Nawas was one of the celebrated poets in Imam al-Ridha's (a.s.) era. One day one of his friends protested to him why he had not written anything about such a personality as Imam 'Ali b. Musa al-Ridha (a.s.), despite knowing him. Abu Nawas replied: "I swear by God that his greatness prevented me from this; someone like me ".is not able to eulogize the like of him

:Then he wrote a poem, the brief rendering of which is as follows

They tell me: How come you, who are a matchless orator, fail to eulogize"

.Al-Irshad, ٢/٢۶١ -١

.Umdat al-Matalib, ١٩٨. See: A'lam al-Hidaya, p. ٢١' -٢

.A'lam al-Hidaya, p. ٢١ -٣

.I'lam al-Wara, ٢/۶۴. See: A'lam al-Hidaya, p. ٢٠ -۴

Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) despite his sublime character? I said, “I cannot eulogize the Imam to whose father Gabriel was a servant.”(1)

One day Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) came out while riding a nimble mule. Abu Nawas approached him, greeted, and said, “O son of the Prophet! I have composed some poetry; I would like you to hear it.” The Imam said, “Recite it!” Abu Nawas recited three lines of his poetry, including this one:

“Whoever is not ‘Alawi in his lineage,

Does not have any honor from his past.”

The Imam (a.s.) said to his retainer: “How much is remained of our expenditure?” He replied: “Three hundred dinars (every dinar costing a mithqal – equivalent to ۵ grams).” His holiness told him to give it to Abu Nawas. When the Imam returned home, he said to his retainer: “Maybe he would regard that amount as little, take this mule to him, as well.”(2)

Imam al-Ridha’s (a.s.) Scholarly Status and Personality

Every conscious Shi‘a know that the Ahl al-Bayt’s (a.s.) knowledge originates from boundless Divine Knowledge, and the Almighty God has given them such knowledge that He has not given to anyone else except the Holy Prophet (S).

The purified Imams (a.s.) possess all the knowledge of the prophetic messengers and archangels.(3) They are most learned about heavens and the earth(4) and all in all they are the treasurers of Divine Sciences; there is nothing needed by people that is hidden from them.(5)

However, the special conditions of any Imam and the instructions given to them by God according to the demands of

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۱- Kashf al-Ghumma, ۳/۱۵۸.

.A‘lam al-Hidaya, p. ۲۲ -۲

.Tawhid of Saduq, see: Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۲۶, p.۱۵۹ -۳

.Basa’ir al-Darajat, see: Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۲۶, p.۱۱۰ -۴

.Ibid, p. ۱۳۸ -۵

the time, caused some of them to have more chances to expound religious issues and express their own widespread knowledge, such as Imam ‘Ali (a.s.), Imam al-Baqir (a.s.), Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.), and of course, Imam al-Ridha (a.s.), in whose era three important events unfolded in such a way as to cause him to overflow his knowledge .into the Islamic society

First: the Waqifiyya sedition and the misconceptions they raised concerning the Imamate of Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) prompting the Imam to guide people in this respect .with his profound answers

Second: destruction of the Barmakids in the fourth year of the Imam al-Ridha’s (a.s.) Imamate, leading to the elimination of one of the most important enemies of the Ahl al-Bayt (a.s.) in Harun’s regime at the hands of Harun, after which a relatively good .chance was provided for the dissemination of the Ahl al-Bayt’s (a.s.) teachings

Third: the issue of Imam al-Ridha’s (a.s.) heir apparency, which drew attention toward him, and the Abbasid Ma’mun who tried to humiliate his holiness before dignitaries of other religions and the scholars of religious schools by holding scientific gatherings and debate sessions; however, as the God Almighty manages the intrigue of the plotters and turns it against themselves, the very same debate sessions and circles led to familiarization with the scholarly eminence of Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) in such a way that great scholars of the time acknowledged his widespread knowledge and .erudition

Imam al-Ridha’s (a.s.) personality from the scholarly point of view is so sublime that Imam Ja‘far al-Sadiq

a.s.), the chief of Ja'fari School, has told his son Musa b. Ja'far about Imam al-Ridha) (a.s.) before being born: "The learned one of the Prophet's household ('Alim Al-i (Muhammad – S) is from your progeny; I wish I would meet him."(۱)

Muhammad b. Musa Yaqtini said, "I have gathered fifteen thousand [topical] issues (from among the answers that Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) gave to people."(۲)

Aba Salt Hirawi, one of the notables of his time, said, "I have not seen anyone more learned than 'Ali b. Musa al-Ridha; no scholar saw his holiness unless he would .confirm this same witness of mine

In numerous sessions, Ma'mun would gather a number of scholars of (various) religions, jurists of (Islamic) law, and theologians – who debated with the Imam (a.s.) – and the holy Imam defeated all of them in such a way that all of them acknowledged .his moral excellence and their own helplessness

And I heard him (Imam al-Ridha – a.s.) saying: 'I would sit in the mosque (of the Prophet – S – in Medina) while there were many scholars there, whenever one of them was unable to answer a question, all of them would point at me and refer the (problem to me to answer, and I would answer."(۳)

Ibrahim b. 'Abbas said, "I never heard anyone asking something from Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) and he would not know the answer. I saw no one more aware than him of the history of the past up to his own time. Ma'mun would

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۱- I'lam al-Wara, ۳۱۵.

۲- Al-Ghayba, Shaykh Tusi, p. ۵۲, see: Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۴۹, p. ۹۷.

۳- I'lam al-Wara, ۲/۶۴; Bihar al-Anwar, ۴۹/۱۰۰.

constantly test him with various questions and he would give him full answers."(۱)

Hasan b. 'Ali al-Washsha', who, due to the misconceptions raised by the opponents converted to the school of waqf (or Waqifiyya)(۲), said, "I wrote some questions in a scroll by which to test Imam al-Ridha (a.s.).

There was such a big crowd gathering at the door of the Imam's house that I did not manage to meet him. All of a sudden I noticed that the Imam's retainer is looking for me, asking: 'Who is Hasan b. 'Ali al-Washsha', the grandson of Ilyas al-Baghdadi?' I said, 'That is me.'

He gave me a letter and said, 'Here are the answers to the questions you have with you (and have not shown them to the Imam yet)!' This way I became certain of his Imamate and gave up the school of waqf."(۳)

Some of the sessions that Ma'mun had arranged were so magnificent and pompous and so many scholars of various nationalities from among the Jews, Christians, Sabaeans, Zoroastrians, and theologians had gathered that Hasan b. Muhammad Nawfili got terrified and advised the holy Imam and said, "They are people of fallacy and misconceptions; beware of them!"

Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) smiled and said, "Are you afraid of their defeating me? O Nawfili! Do you know when Ma'mun will repent this? When he hears my reasoning with the people of Torah with reference to their Torah, with the people of Bible with reference to their Bible, with the people of Psalms

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۱- 'Uyun Akhbar al-Ridha (a.s.), ۲/۱۸۰.

۲- A group of Shi'as who denied the demise of Imam Musa b. Ja'far, believing that he was the last Imam who was still alive. (Dihkhuda)

۳- Manaqib Al-i Abi Talib, vol. ۳, p. ۴۵۳.

with reference to their Psalms, with Sabaeans in their Hebrew language, with Hirbads (Zoroastrians) in their Persian language, with the Romans in their Roman language, and with (other) eloquent orators in their own languages.

When I win them all and each group is defeated by my proofs and arguments and gives up their words and acknowledges the truth of my words, then Ma'mun will repent (holding a session), ... La hawla wa la quwwata illa bi'Allah al-'Ali al-'Azim (There is no power and no strength save in Allah, the All-Exalted, the Almighty)."(١)

Some Examples of Imam al-Ridha's (a.s.) Wise Answers

Although the holy Imam's wise sayings and decisive responses are quite many, we mention some of them here as examples.

Ibrahim b. Muhammad asked the holy Imam: "Why did God drown Pharaoh, although he came to faith?" The holy Imam answered: "Because he came to faith upon seeing punishment; coming to faith at that moment is not acceptable."(٢)

Aba Salt Hirawi asked: "Why did God drown all people in the time of Noah, although there were innocents and children among them, too?" His holiness answered: "There were no children among them, as for forty years their progeny had discontinued; some perished for their denial and some for their consent to denial. Whoever is absent from an event but consents to it, is like someone present perpetrating it."(٣)

Ibn Sikkit (Ya'qub b. Ishaq) asked his holiness: "Why did God send down Moses (a.s.) with a staff and white hand and magic, Jesus (a.s.) with medicine, and Muhammad (S) with speech?" His holiness

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١- Uyun Akhbar al-Ridha (a.s.), ٢/١٣٩; al-Tawhid, ٤١٧.

٢- Uyun Akhbar al-Ridha (a.s.), vol. ٢, p. ٧٦.

٣- Ibid, p. ٧٤.

answered: “In the time of Moses (a.s.) magic prevailed, in the time of Jesus medical needs, and in the time of the Prophet (S) sermons and speeches.”

He went on to ask: “By God, I have never seen the like of you; what is Allah’s Authority over people now?” The Imam answered: “Intellect, by means of which the veracious-to-God will be distinguished from the liar.” Ibn Sikkit said, “By God, this is the true answer to my question.”(۱)

Hasan b. ‘Ali b. Fadhdhal asked the Imam: “Why did the people distanced from Commander of the Faithful ‘Ali (a.s.) while they knew his excellence and achievement as well as his relation to the Prophet (S)?”

His holiness replied: “Because ‘Ali (a.s.) had killed their fathers, forefathers, brothers, uncles, and their near of kin, who battled against Allah and His Apostle and they were many in number, so they were vindictive to him and unwilling to be under his guardianship; but others did not do this in the holy wars (jihad), therefore the people distanced from ‘Ali (a.s.) and inclined toward them.”(۲)

Haytham b. ‘Abd Allah asked his holiness: “Why didn’t [Imam] ‘Ali fight with his enemies twenty five years after the Prophet (S) but he fought during his ruling days?” Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) said, “He followed the example of the Prophet (S) who did not fight with the unbelievers for thirteen years in Mecca and nineteen years in Medina and the reason was lack of enough helpers; similarly, ‘Ali (a.s.) gave up fighting

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۱- ‘Uyun Akhbar al-Ridha (a.s.), vol. ۲, p. ۷۹ (in brief).

۲- Ibid, p. ۸۰.

(with the enemy because his helpers were few."(1)

Hasan b. 'Ali b. Fadhdhal asked his holiness: "Why is the Prophet's nickname Abu al-Qasim?" He answered: "Because he had a son named Qasim." The narrator said, "Do you deem me worthy of telling me more?"

The Imam said, "Yes." He said, "Do you know that 'Ali is the distributor of the Paradise and the Hell?" The man said, "Yes." His holiness said, "The Prophet (S) is called Abu al-Qasim (the father of the distributor) because he is [the spiritual] father of ('Ali, who is) the distributor of Paradise and Hell."(2)

Someone asked Imam al-Ridha (a.s.): "Is it (the hadith) true that the Prophet (S) said, "My companions are like stars, whichever you follow, you will be guided?" The Imam said, "Yes, what the Prophet (S) means are those who did not change or transform the way."

He asked: "How would it become known?" His holiness said, "By means of the hadith related – by the Sunnis – from the Prophet (S) saying: "On the Resurrection Day some men will distance my companions from my Fountain just like they distance strange camels from the water.

I say: O Lord! My companions, my companions! I am told: You do not know what they did after you! And take them to the left. I say: May they be far! May they be perished!" Then Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) said, "Do you think this would be for those who remained unchanged and unvaried?"(3)

Imam al-Ridha's (a.s.) Knowledge of Various Languages

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Imam al-Ridha's (a.s.) scholarly character

p: ۳۲

1- Ibid, p. ۸۰.

2- Ibid, p. ۸۴.

Ibid, ۸۶. Some of the dignitaries among Sunnis, such as Bukhari and Muslim in their -۳ Sahihs as well as others have related from various narrators the hadith about some of the companions' deviation with various references and sanads.

is not restricted to religious and intellectual issues and the common sciences; rather, some manifestations of his Divine knowledge was revealed to the people that indicated his connection to the unseen world, some examples of which are pointed .out as follows

Imam al-Ridha's (a.s.) Familiarity with Various Current Languages of the Time .١

Aba Salt Hirawi said, "Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) used to speak with people whose languages were different in their own languages. By God, he was the most fluent and (knowledgeable of all people in any language."(١

One day he said to Imam al-Ridha (a.s.): "O son of the Apostle of Allah! I am astonished of your mastery of different languages." His holiness answered: "O Aba Salt!" I am Allah's authority (Hujja) over His creatures and Allah never assigns a Hujja .over a folk whose language he does not know

Have you not heard Commander of the Faithful (a.s.) saying that we are given the (clear proof (fasl al-khitab) and this is nothing but knowledge of languages?"(٢

Someone by the name of Isma'il Sindi had come from India to see Allah's authority (Hujjat Allah). He was guided to Imam al-Ridha's (a.s.) presence. He said, "I went to the Imam but I did not know Arabic, so I greeted him in Sindi language, his holiness .answered my greeting in my own language

I talked to him in my language and he talked back to me in my language. I told him: 'I have come to see Allah's authority in Arabia.' He answered: 'That is me (Allah's authority) ask whatever you like.' I asked my questions

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.Uyun Akhbar al-Ridha (a.s.), ٢/٢٧٤ -١

.Ibid -٢

.and the Imam answered in my own language

When I wanted to leave, I said, 'I do not know Arabic; ask God to inspire Arabic language to me! His holiness rubbed his blessed hand on my lips, just then I was able (to speak Arabic!"(١)

In Basra, when one of his opponents called 'Amr b. Haddab wanted him to prove his claim of knowing any language and speak with the Romans, Hindus, Persians, and ".Turks who were in town, the holy Imam said, "Call them in

A number of the speakers of various languages were brought to the presence of his holiness and he talked to all of them in such fluency that all admitted to the Imam's mastery and the people were astonished at seeing this happening,(٢) because Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) had never had a teacher in this regard and had never learned various languages with anyone, nor had he associated with these individuals in Medina so as .to learn to speak so many languages with such fluency

Imam al-Ridha's (a.s.) Familiarity with the Language of the Birds and Animals .٢

Various manifestations of Imam al-Ridha's (a.s.) knowledge of the animals' language is recorded, some of which are pointed out here. Sulayman b. Ja'far said, "I was with Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) in the garden when all of a sudden a sparrow came to his .holiness and began to chirp

His holiness said, 'Do you know what it is saying?' I said, 'No, Allah and His messenger and his son know best.' His holiness said, 'She says a snake wants to eat her chicks. Take

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.Kashf al-Ghumma, ٣/٩١; Al-Khara'ij wa al-Jara'ih, ١/٣۴٠; Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۴٩, p. ۵٠ -١

.Al-Khara'ij wa al-Jara'ih, ١/٣۴١; Al-Thaqib fi al-Manaqib, ١٨۶; Bihar al-Anwar, ۴٩/٧٣ -٢

this stick, go to that house and kill the snake.' He said, 'When I entered the house, I saw a snake was moving around and I killed it."(1)

A person called Harun b. Musa says: "I was in a desert with Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) when his horse neighed and the Imam let go of (the rein of) the horse; it went away (to a corner) and relieved itself and came back.

Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) – who had noticed my surprise – looked at me and said, 'Nothing has been granted to the prophet David (a.s.) except that more also has been granted to Muhammad (S) and his Household (a.s.)."(2) [Implying that the Prophet David knew the animals' language; so, no wonder we know it, too.]

3. Imam al-Ridha's (a.s.) Widespread Knowledge in Occult Sciences

point

A part of the vast knowledge of Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) is manifested in the occult news reported by his holiness, some of which are mentioned as follows:

Imam al-Ridha's (a.s.) Predictions concerning the Barmakids

His holiness frequently pointed out the annihilation of the Barmakids, who were the closest people to Harun and very influential in his court. On his journey to Hajj pilgrimage, when the Imam glanced upon the dusty face of Yahya b. Khalid Barmaki in the land of Mina, he said, "These wretched people do not know what is going to happen to them this year."(3)

Muhammad b. Fadhl said, "The same year that Harun toppled the Barmakid dynasty, I saw Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) standing to pray in 'Arafat; then he suddenly cast his head down. When he was asked why he did so,

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1- Basa'ir al-Darajat, p. ٣۶۵; Dala'il al-Imama, p. ٣۴٣; Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۴٩, p. ٨٨.

2- Manaqib Al-i Talib, vol. ۴, p. ٣٣۴; Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۴٩. P. ۵٧.

3- Al-Irshad, vol. ٢/٢۵٨; Al-Kafi, ١/۴٩١.

he answered: “I had prayed God to punish the Barmakids, and today my prayer was .answered

When Dawud b. Kathir heard Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) that Yahya b. Khalid had caused Imam Musa al-Kazim’s (a.s.) martyrdom with poisoned dates, he said to the Imam: !“May I be your ransom

If Yahya b. Khalid is your father's murderer, I will sell my soul to God and kill him.” His holiness said, “Do him nothing; what is going to befall him and his children this year (will be much more severe than what you have intended to do.”(١

!Harun will do no Harm to me

His holiness frequently pointed out that no harm would be done to him by Harun. When the Imam was informed that ‘Isa b. Ja‘far had told Harun and sworn that he would murder the one who claims Imamate after Musa b. Ja‘far and that ‘Ali b. Musa al-Ridha has succeeded his father and claims to be the Imam after him and that Harun has given a negative answer, the Imam said, “There will be no harm done to (me by Harun.”(٢

And when it was told to the Imam: “You have been recognized as Imam and popularized as such; blood is dripping from Harun's sword!” The Imam answered: “My .answer is what the Messenger of Allah (S) said

The Prophet (S) said, “If Abu Jahl hurts me in the slightest, be witness that I am not a Prophet; I do also say that if Harun hurts me in the slightest, be witness that I am not an

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١- Dala’il al-Imamiyya, ٣٢٧.

٢- ‘Uyun Akhbar al-Ridha (a.s.), ١/٢۴۵.

Imam.(1) It is related in another hadith that when the Imam was warned about Harun, (he said, "He won't be able to hurt me so much as he tries."(2

Various Predictions

His holiness informed that 'Abd Allah (i.e. Ma'mun) would kill Muhammad (i.e. Amin) and when the narrator [of this hadith] asked with surprise: "Will 'Abd Allah, son of Harun kills Muhammad, son of Harun?!" The Imam said, "Yes, 'Abd Allah, who is in ".Khurasan will kill Muhammad b. Zubayda, who is in Baghdad

And it happened as the Holy Imam (a.s.) predicted.(3) When Imam al-Sadiq's (a.s.) son revolted against Ma'mun in Mecca, His holiness said to him: "O Uncle! Do not deny your father and brother; this will lead you nowhere and will not end. It did happen so ".and after a while, he was defeated and disarmed by Ma'mun's army

One day Ja'far b. 'Ali 'Alawi passed by a group of Hashemite youth with an unfit .appearance. They humiliated him for his unfit appearance

Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) said, "You will soon see him with abundant properties and a large following. Less than a month later he was appointed as governor of Medina and his (condition changed for the better.(4

Awareness of Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) of Children in Mother's Wombs

Someone said to Imam al-Ridha (a.s.): "When I was coming – from Kufa – my wife was pregnant, ask God that our baby be a boy child!" His holiness said, "It is a pair of "!twins

When I wanted to leave, his holiness addressed me and said, 'Name one 'Ali and the" other Umm 'Umar

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1- Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۴۹, p. ۵۹; Manaqib Al-i Abi Talib, ۴/۳۶۸.

2- Uyun Akhbar al-Ridha (a.s.), ۲/۲۴۵'.

3- A'lam al-Hidaya, p. ۲۲) Al-Manaqib, ۴/۳۶۳).

.Al-Fusul al-Muhimma, ۲۴۷ -۴

or ‘Amr (i.e. they are not both boys).’ When I returned to Kufa I found out there were – (a boy and a girl born to us.(۱

Because of Imam al-Ridha’s (a.s.) advice, I named the boy ‘Ali and the girl Umm ‘Umar. When my neighbor (who was an adversary) heard about it said, ‘Now I no (longer accept the words of those who say you are a Rafidhi”(۲

One day, Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) went to visit his uncle, Muhammad b. Ja‘far, who was in his deathbed. He noticed that his other uncle, named Ishaq b. Ja‘far, and some other people weeping at his bedside. His holiness left the room with a meaningful smile, so .that those present were surprised

His holiness said, “My surprise is because Muhammad b. Ja‘far will recover and Ishaq b. Ja‘far who is now weeping for him will die and Muhammad b. Ja‘far will weep for (him!” And it happened as the Imam (a.s.) had stated.(۳

Someone named Hasan b. Musa, two of whose handmaidens were pregnant, sent a letter to the Imam asking him to pray for his handmaidens to bear boy children. His holiness replied in a letter: “All things are in the Hands of God; if He wills, there will be a boy and a girl born to you. Name the boy Muhammad and the girl Fatima.” It turned (out to happen as his holiness had predicted.(۴

Someone else, whose eleven children had died, complained to Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) about his children not to survive; the

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.Kashf al-Ghumma, vol. ۳, p. ۹۸ -۱

Al-Thaqib fi al-Manaqib, p. ۲۱۶; Al-Khara’ij wa al-Jara’ih, ۱/۳۶۱; Bihar al-Anwar, vol. -۲ ۴۹, p. ۵۴; Kashf al-Ghumma, vol. ۳, p. ۹۸. Rafidhi is a name that the Sunnis have given to the zealous Shi’as. By this term they mean someone who rejects (yarfuduna) Islam, but as Kulayni quotes from Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.) it was bestowed on the Shi‘a by God and is preserved in both the Torah and the Gospels. According to Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.), there were seventy men among the people of Pharaoh who rejected their master and

chose to join Moses instead. God therefore called them Rafidha, i.e. those who rejected evil, and ordered Moses to write this word, in the original Arabic, in the Torah. After Muhammad's death, when most of the early adherents of Islam began to stray from the path of truth, only the Shiʿas rejected evil. They thus became the successors of the original Rafidha. (Kulayni al-Kafi, edit by ʿAli Akbar al-Ghaffari, ۱۳۷۵-۷, Tehran, vol. ۸, p.۳۴. – Editor.

۳- Uyun Akhbar al-Ridha (a.s.), vol. ۱, p. ۲۲۳.

۴- Ibid, p. ۲۳۶.

Imam lowered his head and prayed for a long while, then said, "Hopefully two sons will be born to you, one after another." The narrator goes on to say: "It turned out as his holiness had predicted; so, I named the first one Ibrahim and the second one Muhammad and both of them survived."(۱)

After the martyrdom of Imam al-Ridha (a.s.), his cunning enemy, Ma'mun, Said, "I requested something (a prayer) from the Imam for an easy and safe delivery of the baby that one of my most delightful and favorite handmaidens was pregnant with, as she had miscarried several times before.

His holiness said, 'Do not worry! She will deliver a baby boy who is most similar to his mother. However, he will have an extra finger on his right hand and one on his left foot; and it happened as he had predicted."(۲)

Imam al-Ridha's (a.s.) Knowledge of How he would be Martyred and where he would be buried

His holiness had frequently talked about how he would be martyred by Ma'mun, which we will recount in detail in the chapter on his martyrdom. Following are some instances.

Sometimes he said, "I am going on a trip to Khurasan, from which I will not return."(۳) The narrator says: "When Ma'mun invited the Imam (a.s.) to Khurasan from Medina for heir apparency, his holiness went to the Holy Shrine of the Prophet (S) while weeping loudly.

I greeted him and congratulated him for the heir apparency. His holiness said, 'They are taking me away from my grandfather and I will die in a strange land and will be

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۱- Ibid, ۲۴۰.

۲- Al-Ghayba, Shaykh Tusi, p. ۵۲; 'Uyun Akhbar al-Ridha (a.s.), vol. ۱, p. ۲۴۱.

۳- 'Uyun Akhbar al-Ridha (a.s.), vol. ۱, p. ۲۳۳.

buried next to Harun.’(1) That was why he enjoined people to cry for him, when he was leaving Medina.”(2)

As Ma’mun ostensibly expressed interest in Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) and defended the Imamate of Imam ‘Ali (a.s.) here and there, his holiness would say to his friends: “Do not let Ma’mun deceive you; by God, no one but him would kill me; and I have no choice but let what is destined be fulfilled.”(3)

Another narrator reports: “I saw Harun, the Abbasid Caliph, leaving through one of the gates of Masjid al-Haram and Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) from another. His holiness said, ‘How far is home and how near is the meeting; [the city of] Tus will gather me and him [in one place].’(4) And as we know the Harun’s tomb is next to Imam al-Ridha’s (a.s.).”

Sometimes in Medina Mosque, while Ma’mun was lecturing, the Imam (a.s.) said, “You will see me and him buried in one place.”(5) On another occasion he said, “Harun and I would be like these two”, showing his middle and index fingers. The narrator says: “We did not figure out the meaning of the Imam’s words until his holiness was buried next to Harun.”(6)

Imam al- Ridha‘s (a.s.) Cultural Measures

point

A sound analysis of various measures taken by the dignitaries in different eras requires an accurate knowledge of the prevailing conditions of the time and their goals. Without this knowledge, no theory and conjecture will ever enjoy the necessary precision and soundness, especially in relation to the purified Imams (a.s.), who, besides the hidden

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۱- Ibid, p. ۲۳۴.

۲- Ibid, p. ۲۳۵.

۳- Ibid, p. ۱۹۹

۴- Al-Ittihaf bi Hubb al-Ashraf, ۵۹.

۵- Ibid.

۶- Ibid.

issues and Divine inspirations, enjoy profound intelligence and insight and are among .the most knowledgeable human beings

For one thing, the extant historical reports of the circumstances prevailing in those eras are insufficient and incomplete in various aspects so that a researcher cannot .depend on them for a reliable and accurate analysis

However, fortunately there is no need for historical reports concerning the Ahl al-Bayt (a.s.), since we believe that, as it is expedient to the status of Imamate which connects them to Divine science and wisdom, they enjoy inspirations and even codified programs and always make the best and most appropriate decisions in various .circumstances

But all this should not prevent us from touching upon some instances mentioned in his era in order to familiarize ourselves in more details with them. Among those we can point out the circumstances prevailing Imam al-Ridha's (a.s.) era which led to the .widespread promulgation of the Islamic teachings and truths

With reference to the works left behind by Ahl al-Bayt (a.s.), we would find out that after Imam 'Ali (a.s.), Imam al-Baqir (a.s.), and Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.) most of these teachings and truths have been left behind by Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) because of the .special circumstances and a good chance that appeared in his time

Although the enemy tried to falsify the Imam's vast knowledge and cut down his popularity, his period of Imamate, in particular his heir apparency, provided a great chance for his holiness to proceed with the dissemination of Islamic sciences and the truths

:of the Ahl al-Bayt's (a.s.) school of thought. Some of these endeavors are as follows

Confrontation with Zealotry and the Zealots .١

Of the great evils among the followers of Ahl al-Bayt (a.s.) have been and are those who regard them much higher in rank than their true status and hyperbolize them, .believing in their lordship, Prophethood, or some other divine features

This group of people have always been rejected from among the Shi'as and the Imams (a.s.). Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.) said, "Take heeds of your youths lest the zealots should corrupt them, as the zealots are the worst of God's creatures; they belittle God's majesty and claim Lordship for God's servants. By God, the zealots are worse (than the Jews, the Christians, the Magi, and the polytheists."(١

Therefore, Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) proceeded to battle against this group, who were .active in the time of his holiness

In a hadith, Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) relates a tradition with its chain of transmission from his father and forefathers from the Apostle of Allah who said, "Do not raise me above what I deserve; verily, the Almighty Allah made me His servant before appointing me ".as a Prophet

Then his holiness recited ayas ٧٩ and ٨٠ of Surat Al-i Imran.(٢) He went on to quote Imam 'Ali (a.s.) as saying: "Two (persons) will perish because of me while I am not to ".be blamed: an extreme lover and an extreme hater

Then, Imam al-Ridha said, "By God, we are averse to the one who hyperbolizes us and raises us above what we really

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.Tusi, Amali, see Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ٢٥, p. ٢۶۵ -١

It does not behoove any human that Allah should give him the Book, judgment and(-٢ prophethood, and then he should say to the people," Be my servants instead of Allah." Rather [he would say]," Be a godly people, because of your teaching the Book and

because of your studying it. And he would not command you to take the angels and the prophets for lords. Would he call you to unfaith after you have been Muslims?) Qurʾan ٣/٧٩-٨٠

are, just as Jesus, son of Mary, was averse to the Christians." After reciting some verses of the Qur'an, his holiness said, "Whoever claims Lordship for the Prophets, Prophethood for the Imams and Imamate for the non-Imams, we are averse to him (both in this world and Hereafter."(1)

That is to say, the followers of Ahl al-Bayt (a.s.) are to be careful neither belittles the status of the Imams as impressed by the adversaries, nor raise them to the level of Lordship or Prophethood out of undue love and prejudice; rather, they should follow intellect and religious law and what they themselves have stated.

In another tradition, Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) said, "Allah's curse be upon the zealots (ghalis)! Why did they not become Jew?! Why did they not become Magus?! Why did they not become Christian?! Why did they not become Qadari?! Why did they not become Murj'ite?! Why did they not become Kharijite?" (Meaning, why have they attributed themselves to us?) Then, the Imam (a.s.) said, "Do not associate with them (do not confirm them, be averse to them; may God be averse to them."(2)

And when Abu Hashim Ja'fari asked Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) concerning the zealots and the people believing in free-will (Ahl al-tafwidh), his holiness said, "Zealots are unbelievers and Ahl al-tafwidh are polytheists; whoever associates with them, eats and drinks with them, helps them, gets married to them, transacts with them, believes in them, regards them trustworthy, confirms their sayings, or helps them even with the fewest words,

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۱- Uyun Akhbar al-Ridha (a.s.), vol. ۲, p. ۲۰۱; Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۲۵, p. ۱۳۴.

۲- Uyun Akhbar al-Ridha (a.s.), vol. ۲, p. ۲۰۳.

will be estranged from friendship with the Almighty and Glorious Allah, friendship with the Apostle of Allah (S), and the friendship with us the Ahl al-Bayt."(1)

When we refer to the narrations regarding the condemnation of the zealots, we find out that many of those narrations have been quoted from Imam al-Ridha (a.s.)(2), which imply that the zealots were widely active in that era.

One of the zealots told Imam al-Ridha (a.s.): "Yunus b. Ẓabyan – from among those accused of zealotry – has said, 'One night I was circumambulating [around Ka'ba] when I heard a voice from above telling me O Yunus, I am Allah and there is no god but me; worship me and perform prayers to remember me.

When I raised my head, all of a sudden Abu al-Hasan appeared to me.' Upon hearing such words, Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) got so disturbed that he said to that man: 'get away from me! May God curse you and everyone who has told you this and Yunus b. Ẓabyan with a thousand curses followed by a thousand more curses and may every curse take you deep down into Hell. I bear witness that it was no one but the Satan who called him."(3)

When they told Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) that some of those who regard themselves as his followers suppose that these – Divine – attributes belong to 'Ali (a.s.) and that he is Allah, the Lord of the two worlds, the Imam began to shake in utter agitation and sweat profusely

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۱- Ibid.

۲- See the above narrations in: Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۲۵, chapter on rejection of zealotry.

۳- Kashshi, Rijal, p. ۲۳۳ – see: Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۲۵, p. ۲۶۴. This hadith is also a warning to those who claim intuition and their followers, because even if they truly hear a voice, it is not clear whether it is Divine voice or the Satan's, since Satan is in ambush for such people and such states.

and said, “Subhan Allah! Exalted is Allah from what the tyrants and wrong-doers say! Was it not that ‘Ali who ate like other eaters, who drank like among other drinkers, who got married like other ones who got married, etc.? Was he not the one who stood humbly and subserviently in prayer before his Lord and whispered supplications to Him? Is the person who has such features God?”(۱)

Nowadays that the adversaries are harder than ever seeking pretexts to assault on the school of Ahl al-Bayt (a.s.), it is incumbent upon any Shi‘a, in particular, the notable scholars – may the Exalted Allah be pleased with them – to stand up against the extremist and exaggerating proclaims, especially the unrighteous poems, and defend the Ahl al-Bayt’s (a.s.) sanctuary.

Similarly, the committed poets and eulogists are to stay away from the zealots and the deviants, and the people should watchfully warn such individuals.

۲. Imam al-Ridha’s (a.s.) Struggles against Sufis

One of the sects created by a man named Abu Hashim Kufi in Islamic community in the first/seventh century was Sufism, which, under the cover of asceticism and renouncing the world, created innovations in religion and had specific beliefs and practices.

From the very beginning they deviated from the school of the Ahl al-Bayt (a.s.); and the Imams (a.s.) strongly fought against them and warned their followers of approaching them.

Similarly, Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) cautioned the Shi‘as against the dangers of this group and said, “No one will believe in Sufism except for deceiving or misleading or out of foolishness; and it

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۱- Kashshi, Rijal, p. ۱۹۳; Tabarsi, Ihtijaj, p. ۲۴۲; Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۲۵, p. ۲۷۵.

is likely that some may have all three."(1)

He also said, "Those to whom Sufis are mentioned and do not deny them by their tongues or in their hearts, are not from us; and those who deny them are like the ones who fought against the infidels in the company of the Apostle of Allah (S)."(2)

There are plenty of traditions from the Holy Prophet (S) and the purified Imams (a.s.) condemning this deviated group. Since the time of the Infallible Imams (a.s.), the Imami Shi'as have always been unanimous(3) about the invalidity of Sufism and have written many refutations against them.

Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.) called Sufis as enemies of Ahl al-Bayt (a.s.) and regarded those inclined toward them as to be resurrected with them and said, "Soon a group of people who claim to love us will incline toward the Sufis, assimilate to them, name themselves after them, and justify their sayings; whoever is inclined towards them is not from us and I am averse to them."(4)

Unfortunately, misusing the spiritual circumstances of the society and due to the negligence of some of the cultural officials and the silence of some scholars after the magnificent Islamic revolution of Iran, this misguided sect has expanded its activities.

It is the duty of people from all walks of life, especially the leaders of the society and the notable scholars, to prevent this great deviation and innovation and fulfill their responsibilities in protecting the spiritual boundaries of religion and people's beliefs and beware of propagation

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۱- Al-Shaykh al-Mufid, with sound sanad in Al-Radd 'Ala Ashab al-Hallaj – see: Al-Ithna 'Ashariyya, p. ۳۱.

۲- Al-Ithna 'Ashariyya, p. ۳۲.

۳- Al-Ithna 'Ashariyya, p. ۴۴.

۴- Ibid, p. ۳۲

of their leaders, books, and words, because in the country which belongs to the Lord of Time (may Allah subhanahu wa ta‘ala hasten his noble reappearance) and using his holiness' assets and properties to propagate for his adversaries would lead to deprivation from Divine bounties and the Imam's favors.

۳. Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) and the Importance of Imam from the Viewpoint of Ahl al-Bayt (a.s.)

Among Imam al-Ridha's (a.s.) significant cultural measures is the promulgation of Shi‘i beliefs in relation to Imam and Imamate, since many of adversaries have such superficial opinions about Imamate that they reduce the status of the Imam to a level even lower than the ordinary people and consider no sin to be an obstacle to Imamate or obeying the Imam.

Thus, his holiness, Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) made an endeavor to promote the Ahl al-Bayt's (a.s.) opinion in this respect. Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) was occasionally asked about the necessity of the presence of an Imam on earth, to which he would answer: "The earth would not be devoid of an Imam; otherwise it would devour its inhabitants." He would also say: "If the earth is devoid of a Hujja (Allah's authority) for even a blink of an eye, it will devour its inhabitants."(۱)

As for the signs of the Imam, his holiness said, "The Imam has signs; that he is the wisest of people, the best judge, and the most pious, the most patient, the bravest, the most generous, and the most devoted of people; he is born circumcised.

He is pure and clean; he sees his back as he sees in front of

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۱- Uyun Akhbar al-Ridha (a.s.), vol. ۱, p. ۲۱۲.

him. He is more deserving to people than themselves. He is more compassionate to people than their parents are. He is the humblest of all people to the Almighty and Glorious God and the most industrious of all in Divine command (amr) and prohibition (nahy); his prayers are answered so much as if he prays that a rock be cleft in two, it (would."(۱)

In another hadith, he said, "The Imam is certified by the Holy Spirit; there is a column of light between him and Allah through which he sees people's actions. He is informed about what he wishes by it; sometimes that light shines on and he knows (what he (must know); and sometimes it is taken away and thus he does not know...(۲)

Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) said, "We are Divine Proof on earth and His vicegerent among His servants and trustees of His Mystery; we are words of piety and the strongest and most dependable; we are Allah's witnesses and His standards among His creatures. It is because of us that Allah prevents the heaven and earth from falling apart; it is because of us (or by us) that He sends down rain and spreads out His Mercy. The earth shall never be devoid of one of us, either to be apparent or concealed; if it is devoid of Divine Proof even for one day, it will shake and agitate its inhabitants in such (a way that the sea shakes its content."(۳)

Most important of all is the detailed statements

۱- Ibid, vol. p. ۱۶۹.

۲- Ibid. This hadith and others like this imply that, unlike some people's illusion, the Imam's (a.s.) knowledge is neither innate nor unlimited; rather, it is subject to Divine providence.

۳- Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۲۳, p. ۳۵ from Kamal al-Din. What is related in this noble hadith and various other ahadith in this content indicates the deep influence of Imam in the formation of the universe and that the benefits of the Imam's presence are not limited to legislative guidance; for this same reason we can figure out the great benefit of the existence of his holiness Hadhrat Hujjat, Imam Mahdi (May Almighty

.Allah Hasten His Reappearance) during the Occultation

that Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) expressed in Marv Grand Mosque on the early days he arrived there – when he heard about the people's disagreement about Imamate. His holiness smiled and said,

"O 'Abd al-'Aziz! These people are ignorant and have been deceived regarding their religion." Then, stating that the Religion [of Islam] is perfect, since the Prophet (S) appointed 'Ali as the standard-bearer of guidance and the Religion was perfected, he went on to say: "Do they know the value and status of Imamate among the umma so that their choosing an Imam be acceptable? The status of Imamate is too superior, its dignity too great, its position too sublime, its access too difficult, and its depth too profound for the people to perceive it with their intellects and views or fathom it with their opinions or elect an Imam."

"Verily, Imamate is the rank of the Prophets and legacy of the spiritual heirs; Imamate is the position of vicegerency of God and vicegerency of the Prophet (S).

It is the position of Commander of the Faithful and inheritance of al-Hasan (a.s.) and al-Husayn (a.s.); it is the organizer of the Muslims' affairs, the good of this world, and honor of the believers.

Imamate is the firm foundation for the dynamic Islam... Imam is like a radiant sun with whose light the world is illumined, while he is in the horizon out of the reach of the hands and the eyes..."

"Imam is like a trustworthy companion, fostering brother, caring father, and a

shelter for people in their hardship. Imam is the trustee of God among people, His proof for His servants and His vicegerent in His lands. He is the caller to God and the ".protector of Divine Sanctuary

Imam is purified from sins and free from defects; he is given exclusive knowledge" and is characterized with forbearance; he is the order of the faith, stronghold for the ".Muslims, cause of wrath to the hypocrites, and the perdition of the infidels

Imam is the unsurpassed one in his own time; no learned one is equal to him, and he" has no substitute or match or similar... How is it possible then for anybody to know the Imam and elect him? Far from it! Far from it! Intellects are too feeble, thoughts are too astray, wits are too puzzled, the eyes are too blurry, the great are too small, the wise are too dazed, the speakers are too mute, the thinkers are too ignorant, poets are too desperate, the authors are too weak, and the eloquent one are too wordless to describe a single feature of the Imam's dignity or a single excellence of his (excellences."(١

(.Imam al-Ridha and Commander of the Faithful (a.s .۴

point

The plethora of Imam al-Ridha's (a.s.) traditions indicate that in many instances his holiness has tried to introduce Commander of the Faithful (a.s.) and his excellences to :people; some of these traditions are mentioned in the following

Forty Traditions Related from Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) on the Virtues of Commander of the (.Faithful (a.s

He quoted the Apostle of Allah (S) as saying: "O 'Ali! Indeed you are the one who .١ divides the Heaven and Hell; and

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.Uyun Akhbar al-Ridha (a.s.), vol. ١, p. ١٧١' -١

indeed you are the one who will knock at the Gates of Paradise and enter it without any reckoning."(1)

2. He quoted the Apostle of Allah (S) as saying: "The similitude of the members of my Ahl al-Bayt among you is like that of Noah's Ark; whoever boarded it, was saved, and whoever strayed away from it, was thrown into the Fire."(2)

3. He quoted the Apostle of Allah (S) as saying: "God's wrath and that of His Prophet (S) encompasses whoever sheds my (offspring's) blood and bothers the members of my Household."(3)

4. He quoted the Apostle of Allah (S) as saying: "It seems that I have been called in and I have accepted the call; I will depart this life, but I will leave two weighty things with you, one of which is greater than the other one; God's Book that is a rope extended down from the heavens onto the earth. The other is my 'Itrat that is the members of my household. Therefore, watch and see how you treat these two after me."(4)

5. He quoted the Apostle of Allah (S) as saying: "Al-Hasan and Al-Husayn are the two lords of the youth of the inmates of Paradise, and their father is even better than they are."(5)

6. He quoted the Apostle of Allah (S) as saying: "Woe be to those who oppress my Ahl-al-Bayt! It is as if I see their rank to be the same

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1- Uyun Akhbar al-Ridha (a.s.), vol. ٢, p. ٢٦, h. ٩'.

2- Ibid, h. ١٠.

3- Ibid, h. ١١.

4- Ibid, p. ٣٠, h. ٤٠.

5- Ibid, p. ٣٢, h. ٥٦.

(as the hypocrites in the lowest depths of the Fire."(1)

7. He quoted the Apostle of Allah (S) as saying: "Whoever I am the master of, 'Ali is the master of. O God! Like whoever likes 'Ali and be the enemy of whoever is 'Ali's enemy. (Help whoever helps him and belittle whoever belittles him."(2)

8. He quoted the Apostle of Allah (S) as saying: "O 'Ali! Indeed the Exalted Allah has (forgiven you, your household, your followers and those who like your followers."(3)

9. He quoted the Apostle of Allah (S) as saying: "O 'Ali! If you were not there, the (believers after me would not be recognized."(4)

10. He quoted the Apostle of Allah (S) as saying: "O 'Ali! You have been granted three things, which no one has ever been granted before." 'Ali (a.s.) said, "May my father and mother be your ransom! What have I been granted?" the Prophet (S) said, "You have been granted a father-in-law like me, a wife like your wife, and sons like al- (Hasan and al-Husayn."(5)

11. He quoted the Apostle of Allah (S) as saying: "The followers of 'Ali are the (triumphant on the Resurrection Day."(6)

12. He quoted the Apostle of Allah (S) as saying: "Whoever wishes to be delighted by looking at and grab the stem of the red hyacinth ruby that God has planted Himself, should wholeheartedly love (seek as guardians) 'Ali and the Imams from among his progeny, as they are the ones chosen by the Almighty and Glorious Allah; they are purified

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1- Ibid, p. 46, h. 177.

2- Ibid, p. 47, h. 183.

3- Ibid, p. 47, h. 182.

4- Ibid, p 48, h. 187.

5- Ibid, p. 48, h. 188.

.Ibid, p. ۵۲. h. ۲۰۱ -۶

of all sins and faults."(۱)

۱۳. He quoted the Apostle of Allah (S) as saying: "Whoever dies without following an Imam from among my progeny is regarded as one of those who died during the Age of Ignorance (jahiliyya); his deeds are not accepted whether he has performed them during the jahiliyya or after the advent of Islam."(۲)

۱۴. He quoted the Apostle of Allah (S) as saying: "Whoever likes to grab the strongest and the most dependable support should resort to loving 'Ali (a.s.) and the members of my household."(۳)

۱۵. He quoted the Apostle of Allah (S) as saying: "On the Resurrection Day, this man – namely 'Ali – and I will be like these two fingers (he brought together his two fingers) and our followers will be with us; and anyone who helps any oppressed one from our family will be there with us."(۴)

۱۶. He quoted the Apostle of Allah (S) as saying: "The Imams are from among the progeny of Husayn (a.s.). Whoever obeys them it is as if they have obeyed the Almighty and Exalted Allah. They are the strongest and the most dependable support and they are the means towards Allah."(۵)

۱۷. He quoted the Apostle of Allah (S) as saying: "I and 'Ali are made from the same light."(۶)

۱۸. He quoted the Apostle of Allah (S) as saying: "O 'Ali! You are the best of men; no one but the disbeliever would have doubt about it."(۷)

۱۹. He quoted the Apostle of Allah (S) as saying: "The Almighty

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۱- Ibid, p. ۵۷, h. ۲۱۱.

۲- Ibid, p. ۵۸, h. ۲۱۴.

۳- Ibid, p. ۵۸, h. ۲۱۶.

۴- Ibid, p. ۵۸, h. ۲۱۵.

۵- Ibid, p. ۵۸, h. ۲۱۷.

۶- Ibid, p. ۵۸, h. ۲۱۹.

۷- Ibid, h. ۲۲۵.

(Allah will resurrect among the secure ones anyone who loves us (the Ahl al-bayt).”(۱

He quoted the Apostle of Allah (S) as saying: “You (‘Ali) are from me and I am from .۲۰ (you.”(۲

He quoted the Apostle of Allah (S) as saying: “O ‘Ali! You will relieve me of my .۲۱ (obligations; and you are my successor over my nation [after me].”(۳

He related that the Apostle of Allah (S), while holding ‘Ali’s (a.s.) hand in his, said, .۲۲ (“Whoever claims to love me but does not love ‘Ali, is a liar.”(۴

He quoted the Apostle of Allah (S) as saying: “Only those from among the Helpers .۲۳ ((Ansar) with a Jewish descent will despise you.”(۵

He quoted the Apostle of Allah (S) as saying: “The first thing that a servant will be .۲۴ (questioned about is the love of us, the Ahl al-Bayt.”(۶

He quoted the Apostle of Allah (S) as saying: “Only believers love ‘Ali and only .۲۵ (disbelievers despise him.”(۷

He quoted the Apostle of Allah (S) as saying: “Those who love you love me, and .۲۶ (those who despise you despise me.”(۸

He quoted the Apostle of Allah (S) as saying: “I am the city of knowledge and ‘Ali is .۲۷ (its gate.”(۹

He quoted the Apostle of Allah (S) as saying: “Shut all the doors from the mosque to .۲۸ the homes (leading people from their houses to the mosque) except for the one to (‘Ali’s (a.s.) home.”(۱۰

,He quoted the Apostle of Allah (S) as saying to ‘Ali (a.s.): “When I die .۲۹

p: ۵۴

.Ibid, h. ۲۲۰ -۱

.Ibid, h. ۲۳۱ -۲

۳- Ibid, p. ۶۰ h. ۲۲۹.

۴- Ibid, p. ۶۰ h. ۲۳۱.

۵- Ibid, h. ۲۳۴.

۶- Ibid, p. ۶۲ h. ۲۵۸.

۷- Ibid, p. ۶۳ h. ۲۶۶.

۸- Ibid, p. ۶۳ h. ۲۶۵.

۹- Ibid, p. ۶۶ h. ۲۹۸.

۱۰- Ibid, h. ۳۰۲.

the enmities hidden in the hearts of some people will show up and they will unite against you and prevent you from getting what is rightfully yours.”(۱)

He quoted the Apostle of Allah (S) as saying: “‘Ali’s (a.s.) hand is (like) my hand.”(۲) .۳۰ (i.e. whoever pledges allegiance to ʿAli is the same as one who pledges allegiance to me.)

He quoted the Apostle of Allah (S) as saying: “Soon my umma will treat you with .۳۱ treachery and the good and the bad will all follow this (treachery).”(۳)

He quoted the Apostle of Allah (S) as saying: “Whoever swears allegiance to ‘Ali has .۳۲ indeed sworn allegiance to me, and whoever swears allegiance to me has indeed sworn allegiance to Allah.(۴)

He quoted the Apostle of Allah (S) as saying: “The center of Paradise is for me and .۳۳ my Ahl al-Bayt.”(۵)

He quoted the Apostle of Allah (S) as saying: “I am the treasure of knowledge and .۳۴ ‘Ali is the Key; whoever wants the treasure should go to its key.”(۶)

He quoted the Apostle of Allah (S) as saying: “O ‘Ali! I asked Allah for you whatever I .۳۵ asked Him for myself, except for Prophet hood, since there will be no Prophet after me; I am the seal of the Prophets and you are the seal of the trustees.”(۷)

He quoted the Apostle of Allah (S) as saying: “O ‘Ali! People have been created from .۳۶ different trees; I am the root and you are the trunk; al-Hasan and al-Husayn are its branches;

p: ۵۵

۱- Ibid, h. ۳۰۳.

۲- Ibid, h. ۳۰۴.

۳- Ibid, h. ۳۰۷.

۴- Ibid, h. ۳۰۸.

۵- Ibid, h. ۳۱۴.

.Ibid, p. ۷۳, h. ۳۴۱ -۶

.Ibid, p. ۷۲, h. ۳۳۷ -۷

the Shi'as are the leaves; Allah will take to Paradise whoever holds onto any of the branches."(1)

37. He quoted the Apostle of Allah (S) as addressing 'Ali: "Paradise is eager to see you, and eager to see 'Ammar, Salman, Abu Dharr, and Miqdad."(2)

38. He quoted the Apostle of Allah (S) as saying to 'Ali (a.s.): "Your similitude is like that of Jesus (a.s.); the Christians loved him so much as they became disbelievers and the Jews disliked him so much as they became disbelievers."(3)

39. He quoted the Apostle of Allah (S) as saying: "Al-Hasan and al-Husayn are the best people on the earth after me and their father; their mother is the best of the women on the earth."(4)

40. He quoted the Apostle of Allah (S) as saying: "O 'Ali! You and your two sons are the best of the chosen creatures of Allah."(5)

5. Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) and Her Holiness Fatima (a.s.)

It is understood from various traditions that Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) has taken upon himself to recount the virtues and excellences of his grandmother to people. Some of the related traditions are as follows.

Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) quoted the Apostle of Allah (S) as saying: "On the Day of Resurrection, my daughter, Fatima, shall be raised in such a way that she will carry clothes smeared in blood and she will be clinging onto one of the pillars of the Throne and say: "O Allah Dispenser of Justice! Judge between me and the murderer of my son."

The Apostle of Allah added: "By the Lord of Ka'ba, Allah will

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1- Ibid, p. 72, h. 340.

2- Ibid, p. 66, h. 306.

.Ibid, p. ۶۳, h. ۲۶۳ -۳

.Ibid, p. ۶۲, h. ۲۵۲ -۴

.Ibid, p. ۵۹, h. ۲۱۸ -۵

judge in favor of my daughter. The Almighty and Glorious God gets angry whenever Fatima gets angry and is pleased whenever Fatima is pleased."(۱)

In another tradition, Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) quoted the Apostle of Allah as saying: "An angel came to me and said, O Muhammad! God sends you greetings and tells you, 'I have married off Fatima to 'Ali and ordered the Tuba tree to bear pearls, rubies and corals. Indeed, all the residents of the Heaven are happy on this occasion; soon, they will have two sons who will be masters of the youth of Paradise and the people of Paradise will be adorned by them. O Muhammad! You are the best of the first and the last."(۲)

Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) quoted the Apostle of Allah (S) as saying: "When the Resurrection Day comes, the harbinger will call out: O groups of people! Close your eyes so that Fatima, the daughter of Muhammad (S) may pass by."(۳)

Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) quoted the Apostle of Allah (S) as saying: "I did not marry off my daughter Fatima (to 'Ali) except by Allah's commanding me to marry her off."(۴)

Also, he quoted the Apostle of Allah (S) as saying: "Verily Fatima was chaste; therefore, Allah spared her progeny from Fire."(۵)

Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) quoted Imam 'Ali (a.s.) as saying: "The Prophet (S) told me: O 'Ali! Some of the men from Quraysh blamed me regarding Fatima and said that they asked me to marry her off to them, but I refused them and married her

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۱- Uyun Akhbar al-Ridha (a.s.), vol. ۲, p. ۲۵'.

۲- Ibid, p. ۲۶.

۳- Ibid, p. ۳۱, h. ۵۵.

۴- Ibid, p. ۵۹, h. ۲۶۴.

۵- Ibid, p. ۵۹, h. ۲۶۴.

.off to ‘Ali

I told them: By God, I was not the one who refused you; it was the Exalted Allah who refused you and married her off to ‘Ali. Gabriel descended upon me and said, O Muhammad! The Exalted and Almighty Allah says: Had I not created ‘Ali, there would have been no equal to your daughter Fatima on the face of the earth from the time Adam onwards.”(۱)

Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) quoted the Apostle of Allah (S) as saying: “I named my daughter Fatima because the Almighty and glorious Allah has weaned (separated) her and those who love her from the Fire.”(۲)

Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) quoted the Apostle of Allah (S) as saying: “The Exalted Allah is angered when Fatima is angered and pleased when Fatima is pleased.(۳)

۶. Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) and Imam al-Husayn (a.s.)

point

Many traditions have been related from Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) concerning Sayyid al-Shuhada, Imam al-Husayn (a.s.) denoting his holiness’ special favor with his ancestor, especially regarding visitation of his shrine (ziyara) and weeping for him.”

Sometimes he quoted the Apostle of Allah as saying: “The murderer of al-Husayn b. ‘Ali is in a coffin of fire and on him is half of the torment of the people of the world.”(۴) He also quoted the Prophet (S) as saying: “The most evil one of the umma will kill al-Husayn...”(۵)

Imam al-Ridha said, “When they took the decapitated head of al-Husayn b. ‘Ali to Sham, Yazid (God’s curse on him) ordered that a tablecloth be laid down. Then, he and his companions started to eat and drink beer;

۱- Ibid, vol. ۱, p. ۱۷۷, h. ۳.

۲- Ibid, vol. ۲, p. ۴۶, h. ۱۷۸.

۳- ١٧۶ .Ibid, h.

۴- ۵٠ .Ibid, p. ٢١, h.

۵- ٢٧٧ .Ibid, p. ۶۴, h.

when they finished eating and drinking, he ordered the head to be put in a tub in front .of his throne and the chess board to be placed over the tub

Yazid (God's curse on him) started to play chess with his companions while swearing at al-Husayn, his father (a.s.), his grandfather (S) and making fun of them. Whenever he won the game, he would drink three gulps of beer, and poured the leftover on the .ground next to the tub

Whoever is our Shi'a is to abstain from drinking beer and playing chess; and the Almighty and Glorious Allah will wipe out the sins of whoever sees beer and a chess board and remembers al-Husayn (a.s.) and curses Yazid and Al Ziyad, even if his sins (be as many as the number of the stars.(۱

In another hadith, 'Abd al-Salam b. Salih asked Imam al-Ridha (a.s.): "What is your opinion about the tradition related on the authority of Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.) saying: 'When the Qa'im (a.s.) rises up, he will kill the offspring of the murderers of Imam al-'.(.Husayn (a.s

The Imam (a.s.) answered: 'That is right.' Then he asked: 'Then what is the meaning of ?the following words of God Almighty

.No bearer shall bear another's burden. Qur'an: ۳۵/۱۸

His holiness said, 'God is true in all that He says. However, the offspring of the murderers of Imam al-Husayn (a.s.) will be pleased with the deeds of their .forefathers, and will even be proud of it

Whoever is pleased with

p: ۵۹

.Ibid, p. ۲۱, h. ۵۰ -۱

something is like the one who has actually performed it. If someone gets killed in the East and someone else in the West is pleased that he was killed, then he will be considered to be a partner in that crime in the sight of the Almighty and Glorious God'."(1)

Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) and the Visitation (Ziyara) of Imam al-Husayn (a.s.)

Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) had specially favored calling people to visit [the tomb of] Sayyid al-Shuhada (a.s.) and to weep over his martyrdom. Following are some examples in this respect.

Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) quoted Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.) as saying: "The time that al-Husayn's (a.s.) pilgrims spend on ziyara is not reckoned as part of their life."(2)

Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) said, "Whoever visits (makes a pilgrimage to) Husayn b. 'Ali (a.s.) while recognizing his rightfulness, is among those in companionship with Allah over His Throne." Then he recited the following verse:

Indeed the God wary will be amid gardens and streams, in the abode of truthfulness with an omnipotent King. (Q. ۵۴: ۵۴, ۵۵)"(3)

Sometimes he would say: "Whoever visits (makes a pilgrimage to) Abi 'Abd Allah's tomb near Euphrates is like the one who has visited God on His Throne."(4)

He would also sometimes say: "Whoever visits (goes on pilgrimage to) Abi 'Abd Allah's tomb [is as] they have performed Hajj and 'Umra." The narrator asked him: "Will they be exempt from the obligatory Hajj?"

The Imam (a.s.) said, "No. Ziyara of Imam al-Husayn is the Hajj of the weak until they can afford to go on the Hajj pilgrimage to the Holy House of God.

۱- Uyun Akhbar al-Ridha (a.s.), vol. ۱, p. ۲۱۲, h. ۵'.

۲- Kamil al-Ziyarat.

.Ibid, Chapter ۵۴, h. ۶ -۳

.Ibid, Chapter ۵۹, h. ۲ -۴

Don't you know that everyday seven thousand angels circumambulate the House of God and when the night falls they go away and another group comes down to circumambulate the House until morning?

Verily the tomb of al-Husayn (a.s.) is more honorable in the sight of Allah than the House of God; at any prayer time seven thousand angels, with disheveled and dusty hair, descend on him so much as they have no other turn (to come down again) until the Day of Resurrection!"(1)

He also said, "Whoever is by the tomb of al-Husayn (a.s.) on the day of 'Arafa, Allah would return him with a delighted heart."(2)

Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) and the Soil of Sayyid al-Shuhada's (a.s.) Grave

A man said, "Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) sent me a bundle of clothes from Khurasan; there was some soil in it. I asked the holy Imam's emissary: What is this? He said, It is the soil of al-Husayn's (a.s.) grave. Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) never sends clothes or things [to someone] unless he puts in it some of this soil and says: This soil is for safety, with the consent of Allah."(3)

In another tradition, when someone got some red-colored soil from the upper part of the Sayyid al-Shuhada's (a.s.) grave and took it to Imam al-Ridha (a.s.), his holiness placed it on the palm of his hand, smelled it, and then cried so much as his tears rolled down his cheeks and said, "This is the soil of my forefather."(4)

Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) and the Importance of Mourning for Sayyid al-Shuhada (a.s.)

Hasan b. Fadhdhal said, His holiness Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) said, "Whoever remembers our woes and afflictions and weeps

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۱- Ibid, Chapter ۶۵, h. ۶.

۲- Ibid, Chapter ۷۰, h. ۲.

۳- Ibid, Chapter ۹۲, h, ۱.

.Ibid, Chapter ۹۳, h, ۱۱ -۴

over what has befallen us, will be in the same rank with us on the Day of Resurrection. And whoever reminds others of our afflictions and weeps and make them weep, will not be tearful on the day [when other] eyes pour tears; and whoever sits in a session in which our instructions are revived, their hearts will not die on the day when hearts die."(1)

Pouring Tears for Sayyid al-Shuhada's (a.s.) Afflictions

Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) said, "Muharram is a month in which the people of jahiliyya regarded warfare as unlawful, (but) our blood was considered lawful in it, we were desecrated, our children and women were taken captive, our tents were set on fire, our properties were plundered, and our relation to the Apostle of Allah was disrespected.

Verily al-Husayn's day (of affliction and murder) made our eyelids sore (through bitterly weeping), let our tears pour, degraded our dear one in the land of sorrow and tribulation, bequeathing pain and suffering to us until the Resurrection Day.

The weepers ought to weep over such a one as al-Husayn (a.s.); verily weeping for him removes great sins."

When Muharram would start, no one would see the Imam laugh as he was overwhelmed with sorrow so long as ten days passed. On the tenth day, it was his day of wailing and weeping. He would say: "Today is the day al-Husayn, peace and blessing of Allah upon him, was murdered."(2)

Weeping for Imam al-Husayn (a.s.)

Rayyan b. Shabib said, "I went to see Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) on the first day of Muharram; he said, 'O son of

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1- Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۴۴, p. ۲۷۸ (from Saduq's Amali and 'Uyun al-Akhbar).
2- Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۴۴, p. ۲۸۳ from Saduq's Amali, session ۲۷.

Shabib! Are you fasting?' I said I was not. He said, 'Today is the day on which '.Zechariah prayed

Then, he said, 'O son of Shabib! Muharram is the month in which the people of Jahilliya would regard warfare and oppression as unlawful out of respect for this month; but .this umma had neither respect for this month nor any reverence for their Prophet

In this time, they killed the Prophet's grandson, took women captive, and plundered "!properties; may Allah not forgive them

O son of Shabib! If you ever cry for any reason, cry for al-Husayn b. 'Ali b. Abi Talib," whom they beheaded like a ram; with him eighteen men from his household were .killed who were matchless on the face of the earth

Heavens and the earth cried for his being killed; four thousand angels descended for helping him and since they found him dead, they would remain beside his grave, disheveled and soiled, until Resurrection as his companions and their motto would be: "!"O Avengers of al-Husayn

O son of Shabib! If it makes you happy to meet Allah without (having committed any)" sins, make a visitation (ziyara) to al-Husayn (a.s.). O son of Shabib! If it makes you happy to settle in lofty abodes with the Prophet (S) in Paradise, curse the murderers ".of al-Husayn

O son of Shabib! If it makes you happy to have the reward of the one who was killed" along with al-Husayn, whenever you remember him say: 'I wish I were with him

".and attained great salvation

"O son of Shabib! If it makes you happy to be with us in the high ranks of Paradise, be sad in our sadness and happy in our happiness and take it upon yourself our wilaya (friendship), since if someone loves a stone (or takes it as their friend), Allah would muster them along with that stone on the Resurrection Day."(١)

Major Problems of His Holiness Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) in the Time of his Imamate

point

Imam al-Ridha's (a.s.) Imamate began in ١٨٣/٧٩٩ with the martyrdom of his noble father and lasted for twenty years, i.e., until ٢٠٣/٨١٨.

During this period, his holiness encountered various problems proportionate to the time.

At the beginning of his Imamate, the big excruciating problem of Waqifites (Waqifiyya)(٢) happened, which got the Shi'a community engaged for a long time.

The First Problem: Waqifites and Imam al-Ridha's (a.s.) Struggle against them

The Waqf Sect and the Reason behind its Creation

After the martyrdom of Imam al-Kazim (a.s.), in that sever crisis during which the then government had martyred the leader of the society and the Shi'a community was in a distressing situation, all of a sudden one of the greatest divine tribulations occurred, i.e., Waqifite misconception (shubha) which caused the deviation, disintegration, and weakening of many of the Shi'as.

Severity and expansion of this shubha was due to the fact that the founders of this fabricated school of thought were from among the legal representatives of Imam al-Kazim (a.s.) and the well-known people in the Shi'a community, whom people would refer to during the time when his holiness Imam al-Kazim (a.s.) was in prison and a lot of the Imam's properties were accumulated with them.

After the martyrdom of Imam

۱- Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۴۴, p. ۲۸۶ from Saduq’s Amali and ‘Uyun Akhbar al-Ridha (a.s.).

۲- Lit: "the ones who stand still" or "those who stop, put an end to the line of Imams", because they let the succession of Imams end with Imam al-Kazim (a.s.) and contested the transfer of the imamate to his son ʽAli b. Musa al-Ridha (a.s.).”

al-Kazim (a.s.), in order to appropriate the properties, they claimed that the Imam had not been martyred and that he was alive and he was in fact the awaited Imam who !would rise up after a while

Shaykh Tusi (may God sanctify his spirit) said, “The first who promulgated this school were three people named ‘Ali b. Abi Hamza al-Bata’ini, Ziyad b. Marwan al-Qandi, and 'Uthman b. ‘Isa. They did this because of the worldly gains and bought off a group of people such as Hamza b. Bazi‘, Ibn al-Mukari, and Karram al-Khath‘ami and made (them conform to them.(۱

Yunus b. ‘Abd al-Rahman said, “When Imam al-Kazim (a.s.) deceased, there was a lot of property gathered with each one of his administrators; Ziyad b. Marwan, seventy thousand dinars and ‘Ali b. Abi Hamza, thirty thousand dinars and this caused the .waqf (stand still and stop) and denial of the holy Imam’s martyrdom

When I got to know the truth and began to call people to Imam al-Ridha (a.s.), those two (‘Ali b. Abi Hamza and Ziyad b. Marwan) protested to me and said, ‘If you intend to ’.acquire money, we will make you free from need

They offered me ten thousand dinars to keep me silent, but I told them: ‘It is related from Imam al-Sadiq and Imam al-Baqir (a.s.) that when innovations (bid‘a) appear, it is upon the scholars to surface their knowledge, otherwise their faith will be taken away from them. [So] I will not abandon jihad in the way

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.Al-Ghayba, p. ۴۲ -۱

(of Allah in no way, that is why they became my enemy."(1)

Most of the Shi'as Deviated due to the Waqf Misconception

The Waqifite misconception was in the beginning very widespread for the reason explained above, to the extent that it deviated many of the Shi'as and put Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) in a lot of trouble. However, little by little the extensive endeavors of Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) and his loyal companions caused its containment and the Waqifites were exposed. Unfortunately, many of the dignitaries such as 'Abd al-Rahman b. al-Hajjaj, Rifa'at b. Musa, Yunus b. Ya'qub, Jamil b. Darraj, Hammad b. 'Isa, Ahmad b. Muhammad b. Abi Nasr, Hasan b. 'Ali al-Washsha', and others(2), were among their .members, who realized their own mistakes and woke up to the truth

Ahmad b. Muhammad said, "Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) told me out loud: 'O Ahmad! When the Apostle of Allah (S) passed away, people made great efforts to put out the light of Allah, but Allah was intent on perfecting His light through Commander of the Faithful 'Ali (a.s.). When Abu al-Hasan (Musa b. Ja'far – a.s.) passed away, 'Ali b. Hamza and his comrades tried to put out the light of Allah, but Allah's intention was to perfect His .light

Verily, when someone joins the people of Truth, they become glad but when someone leaves them, they will not show impatience since they are certain about their faith; however when someone joins the people of falsehood, they become glad and when someone leaves them they become impatient because they are doubtful about their own

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Ibid, p. ۴۳ -۱

See Rijali (Biographical) books, such as Rijal of Najashi, Shaykh Tusi, Ibn Abi - ۲ .Dawud, etc

:faith. The Exalted and Glorified Allah says

the enduring abode (fa mustaqarr) and the place of temporary lodging (wa .mustawdi‘) [abode].Qur'an: ۶/۹۸

And Abu ‘Abd Allah said, ‘mustaqarr is the (one who is) enduring (in faith) and mustawdi‘ is the (one whose faith is) temporary;(۱) that is to say, no one should become shaky and doubtful for the deviation of the companions of Imam al-Kazim .(a.s.), since their faith had been temporary

Imam al-Ridha's (a.s.) Measures against the Waqifites

His holiness made widespread attempts to fight off this misconception and confront this deviant and perilous group; sometimes, he would debate with their chiefs or followers and guided some groups through showing them certain miracles and .sometimes, exposed them and disclosed their treacheries and lying

Sometimes, he would prohibit the Shi‘as from associating with them and other times .he would strongly curse and remonstrated them

Imam al-Ridha's (a.s.) Negotiation with the Chiefs of the Waqifites

It is related that three of the Waqifite chiefs by the name of ‘Ali b. Abi al-Hamza, Ahmad b. Sarraj, and Husayn b. Hashim, also known as Ibn al-Mukari went to Imam .(.al-Ridha (a.s

Ali b. Abi Hamza said to the holy Imam: "What happened to your father?" The Imam‘ answered: "He passed away." He asked: "Through death?" The Imam said, "Yes." He asked: "Who did he sign his last will to?" The Imam replied: "To me." Then, he asked again: "So, you are the Imam whose obedience is made obligatory by God?" The ".Imam said, "Yes

The other two said, "God has given you power." The holy Imam said, "Woe on you! What power? Do

۱- Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۴۸, p. ۲۶۱.

you want me to go to Baghdad and say to Harun that I am the Imam whose .obedience is obligatory? By God, this is not my duty

What I told you was because I was informed that you have disunited; I wanted that your secret would not get into the hands of the enemies." 'Ali b. Hamza said, "You have unveiled something that none of your forefathers would not have unveiled and .uttered." His holiness said, "It is not so

By God, the best of my forefathers, the Apostle of Allah (S) uttered this when Allah commanded him to warn his close of kin and he invited forty people of his relatives and told them that he was the messenger of Allah to them; and the one who denied .and attacked him most of all was his uncle Abu Lahab

The Prophet (S) told them: 'If Abu Lahab inflicts a single scratch on me, I am not a prophet; and this is the first sign of my Prophet hood that I express to you.' (Then the holy Imam said) and I also say if Harun inflicts a single scratch on me, I am not an ".Imam; and this is the first sign of my Imamate that I express to you

Ali b. Abi Hamza said, "We have a hadith from your forefathers that the Imam's' affairs (funeral and burial practices and saying funeral prayer over the body) is undertaken only by an Imam (meaning: if you were an Imam, you should

have done these things for your father Imam Musa b. Ja‘far, although you were in ”.(Medina and he was in Baghdad

The holy Imam said, “Was Husayn b. ‘Ali an Imam or not?” He said, “Yes.” The Imam asked: “Who was to undertake his affairs.” He said, “‘Ali b. al-Husayn.” The Imam asked: “Where was ‘Ali b. al-Husayn? Was he not in ‘Ubayd Allah b. al-Ziad’s captivity?” He said, “Yes, but he secretly came and undertook his father’s funeral .practices and returned

The Imam said, “If ‘Ali b. al-Husayn (who was captive in prison) was able to come to Karbala and carry out his father’s funeral, the possessor of this authority – i.e., Imam al-Ridha – is also able to come (from Baghdad) to Medina and undertake his father’s (affairs and return, although he is not captive in prison.”(۱

Commanding to Distance from the Waqifites

Muhammad b. ‘Asim said, “His holiness Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) said, ‘I was informed that you are associating with the Waqifite.’ I said, ‘May I be your ransom! I am associating ’.with them, but I am not of the same opinion with them

The holy Imam said, ‘Do not associate with them; the Almighty and Glorious Allah :says

Certainly He has sent down to you in the Book that when you hear Allah's signs being disbelieved and derided, do not sit with them until they engage in some other (discourse, or else you] too [will be like them (Q. ۴: ۱۴۰).”(۲

This noble hadith and its like is a lesson for the followers of

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.Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۴۸, p. ۲۶۱; Ikhtiyar al-Rijal, p. ۴۶۳ -۱

.Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۴۸, p. ۲۶۴ -۲

Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) to avoid associating with those who oppose religion and/or the .Ahl al-Bayt (a.s.) and do not attend their sessions

Some of the Miraculous Acts of Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) for Guiding the Shi'as

A person named Ibn Abi Kathir said, "After the demise of Musa b. Ja'far, people ceased to follow Imam al-Ridha (a.s.). That year, I went on to Hajj pilgrimage and all :of a sudden saw Imam al-Ridha (a.s.); this aya struck my mind

(Are we to follow a lone human from ourselves?(Qur'an: ۵۴/۲۴

Suddenly Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) came to my side in a flash and (having read my mind) said, 'By God, I am the one that you have to follow!' I said, 'I apologize to God and (you.' And he said, 'You are forgiven."(۱

In another instance, 'Abd Allah b. Mughayra said, "I was an advocate of the Waqifites while I went on to the Hajj and next to the House of God and I said, 'O God! You know what I am after. Guide me to the best Religion. After that, it came to my mind to go to Imam al-Ridha (a.s.). I came to Medina, went to his holiness' house door, and said to '.his retainer: 'Tell him a man from Iraq is at the door

All of a sudden, I heard his holiness say: 'O 'Abd Allah b. Mughayra! Come in!' When I entered, he said, 'God responded to your prayer and guided you to His religion.' I said, 'I bear witness that you are Allah's Authority (Hujja) and His Trustee over His (creatures."(۲

The Fate of some Followers of the Waqifites in Imam al-Ridha's (a.s.) Words

,Ibrahim b. Yahya said

.Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۴۹, p. ۳۸ -۱

.Ibid, p. ۳۹ -۲

Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) told me: 'What did that wretched, Hamza b. Bazi', do? I" answered: 'He has come.' The Imam (a.s.) said, 'He imagines my father is alive; today, they are doubtful and tomorrow, they will die in heresy.(1)

The holy Imam cursed one of the heads of the Waqifites, namely Ibn Mihran, and said, "May God remove the light of your heart and bring poverty to your house."(2) He also cursed 'Ali b. Abi Hamza, the head of the Waqifites and called him a damned infidel.(3)

Husayn b. 'Ali al-Washsha' (who was at first doubtful and later welcomed the truth by a miraculous act of Imam al-Ridha – a.s.) said, "My master Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) summoned me in Marv and said, 'O Hasan! Today 'Ali b. Abi Hamza died (in Kufa) and they now laid him in grave; two angels went down to him and asked: 'Who is your lord?'

He said, 'Allah.' They asked: 'Who is your Messenger?' He said, 'Muhammad (S).' They asked: Who is your guardian (wali)?' He said, "Ali b. Abi Talib.' They asked: 'After him?' He said, 'Al-Hasan.' They asked: 'After him?' He said, "Ali b. al-Husain.'

They asked: 'After him?' He said, 'Muhammad b. 'Ali.' They asked: 'After him?' They said, 'Ja'far b. Muhammad.' They asked: 'After him?' He said, 'Musa b. Ja'far.' They asked: 'After him?' His tongue began to tremble. They asked him again angrily: 'After him?' He kept silent. They asked: 'did Musa b. Ja'far commanded this to you?' Then, they beat

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١- Ibid, vol. ۴٨, p. ٢۵۶.

٢- Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۴٨, p. ٢۶١.

٣- Ibid, p. ٢۵٧.

him with a fiery club so that his grave is on fire till Resurrection!"

Husayn b. 'Ali al-Washsha' said, "I left the presence of the Imam and wrote down the date of that day. After several days, I received a letter from Kufa that Bata'ini ('Ali b. Abi Hamza) had died on that same day and had been laid in the grave at that same hour that the holy Imam said."(۱)

The Second Problem: Delay in Imam al-Jawad's (a.s.) Birth

Among the issues that made Divine trials difficult for the Shi'as in the time of Imam Al-Ridha (a.s.) and increased the enemies' pretext for their opposition with his holiness and perplexed the simple-hearted was that the birth of Imam al-Jawad as his first child took place in the last decade of his noble life, when past forty, namely, over ten years after his Imamate started at the age of ۳۵.

This led some people to find fault with his holiness for not having a successor, and therefore the Imam emphasized that God would give him a child. Kalim b. 'Imran addressed the Imam: "Ask Allah to grant you a child." His holiness replied: "I will be given a child, who will be my heir."(۲)

A man asked al-Bazanti (one of the Imam's companions): "Who will be the Imam after your master (Imam al-Ridha)?" "Ask it from his holiness." He went to the Imam and asked him.

The Imam said, "The Imam (after me) is my son." Then, he added: "Can anyone say my son while having no son?" After some time, his holiness

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۱- Ibid, vol. ۴۹, p. ۳۸.

۲- Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۵۰, p. ۱۵.

(Imam] al-Jawad (a.s.) was born.(1)]

Aqabat b. Ja'far told Imam al-Ridha (a.s.): "You have reached such an age but you' have no child?" His holiness said, "The possessor of this authority will not die until he (sees his successor."(2)

Another person said to Imam al-Ridha (a.s.): "Will your Imamate be handed over to an uncle?" the Imam said, "No." "What about to a brother?" "No." said the Imam. The man added: "Then, who will it be given to?" (That is, that you have no son at present.) The (Imam answered: "To my son." However, he did not have a son that day.(3)

The Imam was frequently asked in this regard, and he would say: "Allah will grant me (a son."(4)

Husayn b. Qiyama who was one of the heads of Waqifites, asked Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) if he was an Imam. His holiness said, "Yes." He said, "I take Allah as witness that you "!are not an Imam

At this moment, Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) lowered his head and scratched the ground with his fingers for a long time; then, he raised his head and said, "How did you know that I am not an Imam?" he answered: "I heard from Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.) that an Imam is ".not childless, whereas you have reached such an age and still have no child

Again the Imam (a.s.) lowered his head for a longer time than before and then said, "I take Allah as witness that days and nights will not pass until Allah will grant me a ".child

The narrator

.Ibid, p. ٢١; ibid, p. ٢٢, from al-Kafi, and al-Irshad -١

.Ibid, p. ٣٥ -٢

.Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ٥٠, p. ٢١ -٣

.Ibid, p. ٣٥ -۴

said, "No longer than a year had passed when his holiness Imam al-Jawad (a.s.) was born."(1)

After the birth of Imam al-Jawad and the fulfillment of his holiness Imam al-Ridha's (a.s.) prediction (two reasons proving Imam al-Ridha's (a.s.) Imamate), Ibn Qiyama was told: "Is this evidence not sufficient for you?" he admitted and said, "I swear by Allah that this is a great sign."

However, he used a hadith as an excuse and refused to retreat from his deviated opinion.(2)

That is why the birth of Imam al-Jawad (a.s.) was very crucial for the Shi'as; therefore, Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) named his son the blessed newborn.

A man called Yahya al-San'ani said, "I entered the presence of Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) in Mecca; I saw his holiness peeling off a banana for his son to give it to him.

I asked: 'May I be your ransom! Is he that blessed newborn?' He said, 'Yes, O Yahya! This is the newborn that no other newborn has been born in Islam more blessed for the Shi'as than he.'"(3)

The author says: "It becomes clear from the questions and the protests concerning the birth of Imam al-Jawad (a.s.) that most of these people were not sufficiently aware of their Imams and their programs in general.

Of course, the inappropriate propagation climate of the time was also highly effective in this unawareness, otherwise, according to various traditions, the issue of Imamate of the Imams, their practical programs, even their names were all determined by God and declared by the Prophet

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۱- Ibid, vol. ۴۹, p. ۳۴.

۲- Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۴۹, p. ۶۸.

۳- Ibid, vol. ۵۰, p. ۳۵.

.(S)

Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.) said, "The issue of succession (Wasiyya) – Imamate – was revealed to the Prophet (S) in writing, despite the fact that no other issue had been reveled in sealed writing to the Prophet (S) than this, which was handed over to him by .Gabriel so as his holiness would convey it to 'Ali (a.s.) and his children

That writing had some seals and Commander of the Faithful 'Ali (a.s.) was ordered to break one of the seals and act according to what was enjoined in it; and he did so. Then, Imam al-Hasan (a.s.) did as instructed and then handed it over to Imam al-Husayn (a.s.); when he broke the seal, he found it written: 'Rise up along with a group [of others]; there is no martyrdom for them but with you; and sell your soul to the '.Almighty and Glorious Allah

His holiness did so, and handed it over to 'Ali b. al-Husayn (a.s.). When he opened it, he saw it written: 'Cast your head down, keep silent, sit at home, and worship your God until your death arrives.' His holiness did so, and handed it over to his son, Muhammad .(.b. 'Ali (a.s

When he opened it, it read: 'Recite hadith to people and give fatwa (legal judgment) and have no fear of anyone except the Almighty and Glorious Allah, as no one has .access to you.' His holiness did so and then gave it to his son, Ja'far

When his holiness opened the

seal, it was mentioned in it: Recite hadith to people, give fatwa, spread about your household’s sciences, confirm your noble forefathers, and have no fear of anyone except the Almighty and Glorious Allah; you are in safety and this will continue for all .(.the Imams until Imam Mahdi (a.s

The Third Problem: The Issue of Imam al-Ridha’s (a.s.) Heir Apparency

The mysterious event that the Abbasid Ma’mun had plotted, was a divine trial that the Shi‘as were afflicted with; for, not a long time had passed since so many crimes and suppressions by the Abbasids, in particular by Harun (Ma'mun’s father) and the massacre of the Prophet (S)’s children and Shi’a’s, especially the martyrdom of Imam al-Kazim (a.s.), that Ma'mun’s proposing heir apparency to Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) .bewildered everybody

The hatred that the Shi‘as in general had towards the despotic ruling system, in particular Harun al-Rashid, because of the latter’s animosity with the Ahl al-Bayt (a.s.) and the crime of killing Imam al-Kazim’s (a.s.) as a martyr, caused them not to agree with the Imam’s (a.s.) decision to accept Ma’mun’s proposal, and although his holiness had been forced to accept it, this unprecedented task sounded extremely controversial to a group, particularly the deviated Waqifites seized the opportunity to .intensify their propaganda

That was how the simple-hearted and unaware people began to protest instead of conceding to their Imam, frequently saying to the holy Imam: “Why did you enter Ma’min’s court?” And his holiness would answer: “For the same reason that my (forefather, Commander of the Faithful ‘Ali (a.s.) entered the Shura.”(١

Once in

Bihar al-Anwar, nol. ۴٩, p. ١۴٠. Shura, (Arabic: “consultation”), in early Islamic history, -١ the board of electors that was constituted by the second caliph 'Umar b. Khattab .(١٢/۶٣۴–٢٣/۶۴۴), to elect his successor

a response to one of these protesters, the Imam (a.s.) said, “Is the Prophet Afdhal (superior) or the successor?” “The Prophet,” said the protester. The Imam (a.s.) asked ”?again: “Is a Muslim superior or a polytheist

The man answered: “The Muslim.” The Imam (a.s.) said, “Potiphar was a polytheist and Joseph was a prophet; Ma’mun is a Muslim and I am a wasi (successor). Joseph personally asked Potiphar (as described in the Qur’an) to give him wilaya ((mastership), but I was forced to.”(۱)

(.Plot to Assassinate Imam al-Ridha (a.s

Muhammad b. Zayd said, “When Ma’mun elected Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) as his heir apparent, one of the Kharijite prepared a venomous knife and said to his companions: ‘I swear by God that I am going to this man who claims to be the son of the Messenger of Allah but has entered the despot’s court, to ask him about the fact of .the matter

If he does not have a convincing reason, I will get rid of him!’ With this decision, he ”.entered the holy Imam’s house

Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) said, ‘My answer to your question will be subject to a condition;“ do you agree?’ He asked: ‘What condition?’ The Imam said, ‘If my answer is ’!convincing, break that knife hiding in your sleeve and put it away

The Kharijite who was perplexed took out the knife on the spot and broke it. Then, he“ said, ‘Why did you come to this despot’s court, although they are disbelievers in your sight and you are the Apostle of Allah’s

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.Bihar al-Anwar, nol. ۴۹, p. ۱۳۶ -۱

"!?son

The holy Imam answered: "To your opinion, are these more disbelieving or the" Potiphar and the people of that country [Egypt]? Is it not true that these assume to be "?Monotheist, but those [Egyptians] were not Monotheist and did not know God

Was not Joseph son of Jacob (a.s.) a prophet and son of a prophet?! He said to" Potiphar who was a disbeliever (as mentioned in the Qur'an): 'Assign me to the '.treasures of the land (Egyptian assets), as I am a wise guard

He associated with the Pharaohs and I am a man from the household of the Apostle of Allah. They forced me to this and I accepted reluctantly; what objection or problem do you have with me?" Hearing this definite answer, the Kharijite said, 'There is no objection with you. I testify that you are the son of the Apostle of Allah and that you (are truthful."(١

(.Report about the Tablet and the Names of the Purified Imams (a.s

When Imam al-Baqir (a.s.) was in his sickbed, he summoned his son, Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.) to appoint him as his successor. Imam al-Baqir's brother, Zayd b. 'Ali said, "It would not be unwarranted if you treated me like al-Hasan and al-Husayn (meaning ".(made me your successor

His holiness answered: "Trusts are not tied to examples and caliphates are not run by customs; rather, they are matters already predetermined concerning the proofs ".(Hujja) of the Almighty and Glorious Allah

Then, his holiness called in Jabir b. 'Abd Allah Ansari and told him: "O Jabir! Tell the (story of that Sahifa (scroll

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.Bihar al-Anwar, nol. ۴۹, p. ۵۵ -١

that you saw.” Jabir said, “Yes, I went to my lady Fatima (a.s.), daughter of the Apostle of Allah (S), to congratulate her for the birth of al-Husayn (a.s.). I saw a scroll radiating in her hand; I asked: “O Chief of the ladies! What is in your hand?” She said, “There are the names of the leaders and Imams from among my children in it.” (In another hadith, she is quoted as saying: “This is a tablet that the Almighty and Glorious Allah gave to His Messenger, and there are in it the names of my father, my husband, two sons, and the names of the successors from among my children. My father gave it to me to make me delighted.)

Jabir went on to say: “I asked her to give it to me to see. She said, “I would give it to you, if it were not forbidden, but nobody except the Prophet (S), or his successor, or his Ahl al-Bayt would not touch it. However, you may take a glance inside it.”

Jabir said, “I took a look and saw there was written: Abu al-Qasim Muhammad b. ‘Abd Allah al-Mustafa, whose mother is Amina; Abu al-Hasan ‘Ali b. Abi Talib al-Murtadha, whose mother is Fatima bint Asad b. Hashim b. ‘Abd Manaf; Abu Muhammad al-Hasan b. ‘Ali al-Birr, Abu ‘Abd Allah al-Husayn b. ‘Ali al-Taqi, whose mothers are Fatima daughter of Muhammad (S); Abu Muhammad ‘Ali b. al-Husayn al-‘Adl, whose mother is Shahrbanu daughter of Yazdgerd(١); Abu Ja‘far

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١- Yazdegerd III or Yazdgerd III was the twenty-ninth and last king of the Sassanid dynasty of Iran and a grandson of Khosrow II (٥٩٠–٦٢٨ A.D.). His father was Shahryar, whose mother was Miriam, the daughter of the Byzantine Emperor Maurice.

Muhammad b. 'Ali al-Baqir, whose mother is Umm 'Abd Allah daughter of Hasan b. 'Ali b. Abi Talib; Abu 'Abd Allah Ja'far b. Muhammad al-Sadiq, whose mother is Umm Farwah daughter of Qasim b. Muhammad b. Abi Bakr; Abu Ibrahim Musa b. Ja'far, whose mother is a female slave (jariya) named Hamida; Abu al-Hasan 'Ali b. Musa al-Ridha, whose mother is a female slave named Najma; Abu Ja'far Muhammad b. 'Ali al-Zaki, whose mother is a female slave named Khayzuran; Abu al-Hasan 'Ali b. Muhammad al-Amin, whose mother is a female slave named Susan; Abu Muhammad Hasan b. 'Ali al-Rafiq, whose mother is a female slave named Samana whose patronymic is Umm al-Hasan; Abu al-Qasim Muhammad b. al-Hasan, who is the Authority of Allah (Hujjat Allah), the Upriser (Qa'im), whose mother is a female slave (named Narjis – may Allah's peace and blessings be upon them all."(١)

The author says: the account of the above writing is related in numerous traditions and some Shi'a dignitaries such as Shaykh al-Saduq (ra), Shaykh al-Tusi, Shaykh al-Mufid, Shaykh al-Tabarsi (Tabrisi) al-Nu'mani, al-Kulayni, and others have reported .its content with slight differences in their own books

Imam al-Ridha's (a.s.) Historical Emigration

point

Due to many letters from Ma'mun and frequent referrals by his agents to him, and while he was reluctant to take this trip and knew that this trip is without a return, His (holiness Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) prepared for it.(٢)

Farewell to Medina

Several times the holy Imam went to the grave of his forefather, the Apostle of Allah, (S) to say

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.Bihar al-Anwar, nol. ٣۶, p. ١٩٣ -١

.Al-Kafi, vol. ٢, ٢٠٧ -٢

farewell, acting in a way that repugnance and sadness [for leaving Medina] was .obvious in his countenance

When bidding farewell, he would weep out loud and when someone called Mukhawwal Sajistani congratulated him for the journey he was about to set out, the Holy Imam said, “Leave me to myself; I am separating from the proximity of my ”.forefather and will pass away in a foreign land

Before leaving Medina, the Imam (a.s.) called all his relatives together and told them: (“Cry for me, for I will not return to Medina ever again!”(١

He took hadhrat Jawad (a.s.), who was a child then, to Masjid al-Nabi and while hadhrat Jawad (a.s.) was embracing the Prophet (S)’s tomb, Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) said, “O Apostle of Allah! I leave him with you.” Then, he told all his ministers and delegates to listen to his words and not to oppose him; and asserted his Imamate and (succession to the trustworthy among his companions.(٢

Imam al–Ridha’s (a.s.) Itinerary

point

There are controversies as to how and where had the Imam’s (a.s.) travel route from Medina to Marv been. For instance, did his holiness first go to Mecca and thence set ?out his journey or did he enter Kufa

The Imam’s (a.s.) itinerary seems to have been arranged for him so that it could prevent any movement by Shi‘as and ‘Alawis; therefore, according to some traditions, (he passed by Kufa without entering it.(٣

Nabaj Village

Along the way, his holiness arrived in Nibaj, a village at a distance of ten manzils (٣٥-٥٠ km?) from Basra. Abu

۱- Uyun Akhbar al-Ridha (a.s.), vol. ۲, p. ۲۱۷.

۲- Ithbat al-Wasiyya p. ۳۴۹; Ibn Shahrashub, Manaqib, p. ۱۹۶.

۳- Uyun Akhbar al-Ridha (a.s.), vol. ۲, p. ۱۴۹.

Habib al-Nibaji said, “I saw in a dream that the Apostle of Allah (S) came to Nibaj and entered the mosque where the Hajj pilgrims stay every year.

I went to his presence and greeted him. There was a large dish of Sayhani dates before him; his holiness gave me a fistful of the dates. I counted them and I found they were eighteen. I woke up and interpreted that dream as my living on for eighteen more years!

Twenty days passed when I was informed that Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) has come to Nibaj and settled in the mosque. I went toward the mosque and saw people hastening to join his holiness’ audience. I went to his presence, too, and saw him sitting exactly where I had seen the Prophet (S) was sitting in my dream and there was a straw mat under his feet similar to the mat which was under the Prophet (S)’s feet and that there was a large dish of Sayhani dates before him.

I greeted him; he greeted back and called me forth and gave me a fistful of those dates. I counted the dates and found they were the same number that the Prophet had given me in my dream. I said, ‘O Son of Rasul Allah [S]! Grant me more!’ His holiness said, ‘If Rasul Allah had granted you more, I would grant you more too.”(۱)

Ahvaz

According to the traditions, his holiness fell sick in Ahvaz. Abu Hashim Ja‘fari had a meeting with the

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۱- Uyun Akhbar al-Ridha (a.s.), vol. ۲, p. ۴۵۷.

Imam. It was summer time and extremely hot. They called in a physician and the Imam introduced an herb as medicine to the physician and told him the properties.

But the physician said, “This herb cannot be found in this time of the year.” His holiness said, “Bring in some sugar cane.” The Physician said, “This is even more difficult than the first to find since it is not the time for sugar cane.”

The Imam said, “Sugar cane and that herbal medicine are both available in this land. Pass by that tent, there is a man with a dark skin next to the mill, ask him.” They sent out someone to that place to get those two.

When Raja’ b. Abi al-Ḍahhak (the man in charge of the Imam’s journey) found out about it, he said to his companions: “If we stay here longer, people will be enchanted by him.” Then, they left the place.(١)

While his holiness was leaving Ahvaz, Ja‘far b. Muhammad al-Nawfili attended his presence near Arbaq bridge and said to his holiness: “May I be your ransom! Some people imagine your father is alive.”

The Imam answered: ‘They are telling lies; may Allah’s curse be upon them; if my father had been alive, his inheritance would not have been divided and his wives would not have gotten married.

By God, my father tasted death as did ‘Ali b. Abi Talib.’ I asked: ‘What is my obligation (after you)?’ the Imam answered: ‘It is upon you to

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١- Musnad al-Imam al-Ridha (a.s.), vol. ١, p. ١٧٥.

follow my son, Muhammad ...' and then continued: 'My tomb and that of Harun are (like these," showing his two fingers stuck together.'(1)

Departure toward Fars

(Departure toward Fars(2)

Some have talked about his holiness' sojourn in Bihbahan (Arjan) and his praying in the mosque there.(3) There is also a footprint in that city called qadamgah (footprint) (of Imam al-Ridha (a.s.).(4)

On his way, the holy Imam (a.s.) passed through Yazd and Abarquh, which has a well-known qadamgah, and then through Dehshir, which is apparently the same as .(Farashah (presently known as Islamiyya

There is a place called qadamgah in this city, too. The way from Shiraz to Yazd also passes through that route, i.e., Taft and Islamiyya in which qadamgah is located. Islamiyya's qadamgah comprises of a building complex, which according to an .inscription in its niche, has been constructed by Garshasb b. 'Ali in ۵۱۲/۱۱۱۸

Known then as Masjid-i Mashhad-i 'Ali b. Musa al-Ridha (a.s.), this building has a date (stone, inscriptions, internal ornaments, and other mementos.(5)

Moving toward Khurasan

Shaykh al-Saduq (ra) related: "When Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) entered a house in Fozz quarter,(6) in Nayshabur he planted an almond seed, which turned into a tree and fruited within a year. The people were informed and whoever got sick would eat from the almonds of that tree and would get healed; the ones who had sore eyes, the women who would run into difficulty giving birth to their babies, or the animals which would come down with colic were all cured by the almond or a twig of

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۱- 'Uyun Akhbar al-Ridha (a.s.), vol. ۲, p. ۴۶۳.

۲- ۴۰۷ ۲/۴۰۲ Ibid, vol.۳, p. ۱۴۹; Al-Irshad, ۲-۲۵۵; Al-Kafi,.

.(.Mir'at al-Buldan, Vol. ۱, p. ۳۶۸; see: Jughrafiya-yi Tarikhi Hijrat-i Imam Ridha (a.s -۳

.Ibid -۴

Jughrafiya-yi Tarikhi Hijrat-i Imam Ridha (a.s.), p.۱۰۷. The author says: I am - ۵ honored that a number of my relatives, including my great grandfather Hujjat al-Islam Sayyid Abu al-Qasim Farashahi who was from among the dignitaries and noble scholars of that place and capable of miraculous acts is buried along with some of his children in qadamgah and the vicinity. Also my grandfather Ayatollah Sayyid 'Abd al-Hayy, who was one of the great scholars of Yazd and the Islamic judge there, is .buried in the Mausoleum of Imam-zade Ja'far. May God have mercy on them all

A quarter in Nayshabur (see Yaqut Hamawi, Mu'jam al-Buldan, edited by - ۶ (Wüstenfeld, Leipzig, ۱۸۶۸, vol. ۳ p.۸۹۰). (Trans

.the tree

Then, a man named Abu ‘Umar cut down the tree, as a result of which he lost his abundant properties and wealth; his two sons also took out the root left in the ground in order to fix their house and both of them came down with a severe illness and died (within a year.(١

Muhaddith Qummi (ra) quotes one of the camel-drivers of Imam al-Ridha’s (a.s.) caravan as saying: “When, together with his holiness we arrived in our village (Karand or Karmand in Isfahan), I asked the Imam to write down a hadith in his own :handwriting for me. His holiness bestowed the following hadith as a gift to me

Be a loving friend of the household of Muhammad (S), although you are impious; and“ (be a loving friend of their loving friends, although they are impious.”(٢

Nayshabur

In ٢٠٠/٨١٥, his holiness entered Nayshabur, where the people along with Abu Ya‘qub Ishaq b. Rahuwayh, an eminent figure of the town, went out to welcome him in .Mu‘ayyidiyya village near Nayshabur

Although an old man, Abu Ya‘qub carried the bridle of the Imam’s camel on his shoulder down to the city of Nayshabur.(٣) There was a bath-house in Nayshabur, which, later on became famous as Hammam-i Ridha (a.s.); there was a pond in the .bath which was filled with spring water

Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) performed ghusl (major ablution) there and said prayer beside it; the people noticed this and thereafter began to perform their ghusl in it; they would drink water from it

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.Uyun Akhbar al-Ridha (a.s.), vol. ٢, p. ٣٧۴‘ -١

.Muntaha al-Amal, ٢/١٧٧ -٢

Khalifa Nayshaburi, Tarikh-i Nayshabur, p. ١٧٧; see: Jalil ‘Irfanmanish, Jughrafiya-yi -٣

.Tarikhi Hijrat-i Imam Ridha (a.s.), p. ۱۳۲

for its blessing, would say prayers beside it, and would ask God for their needs to be fulfilled and they would be fulfilled.

Shaykh al-Saduq (ra) said, “That spring is renowned as Kahlan and from that time on the people have attended it and sought healing from its water.(1)

His holiness Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) stayed in Nayshabur for several days, on one of which he went to pay a pilgrimage to Imam-zade Muhammad Mahruq, one of Imam al-Sajjad’s (a.s.) grandsons.

The ruler of Nayshabur said, “Imam al-Ridha said, ‘One of our household members is buried here, we go to pay a pilgrimage to his tomb.’ And then he went to the mausoleum of Sultan Muhammad Mahruq in Talajird and paid a pilgrimage to that holy tomb.”(2)

Hadith of Silsilat al-Dhahab

When Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) was leaving Nayshabur, a group of scholars of hadith, including Muhammad b. al-Rafi‘, Ahmad b. al-Harith, Yahya b. al-Yahya, and Ishaq b. al-Rahuwayh held the bridle of Imam al-Ridha’s (a.s.) camel and said, “We swear you to your purified forefathers to narrate a hadith from your father to us.” It is also related in a hadith that Abu Zar‘a and Muhammad b. Aslam, both memorizers of Prophetic traditions, said to his holiness: “O noble son of the noble! O Imam Son of the Imams! O pure and praiseworthy summation of the prophets! We swear you to your purified forefathers and your noble ancestors to show us your blessed face and recite a hadith from your forefathers to us as a keepsake from

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1- Uyun Akhbar al-Ridha (a.s.), vol. ۲, p. ۳۷۶‘.

2- Tarikh-i Nayshabur, p. ۱۷; see: Imam ‘Ali b. Musa al-Ridha (a.s.), p. ۸۲.

".you

At this time, the Imam's camel halted, the curtain [of the camel litter] was pulled away and the Muslims' eyes glistened at the sight of his blessed radiant face. The hair hanging from both sides of the Imam's head was like those of the Prophet (S); some of the (excited) people who were standing there were crying and weeping and tearing .their clothes and prostrating on the ground

Some were kissing the bridle of his camel and others were stretching their necks to better see the face of his holiness. The people waited there until noon, as tears were .rolling down their eyes like little brooks

The dignitaries and judges shouted: 'O people! Listen and surrender your hearts; do not disturb the Prophet (S.AW.) concerning his household. Then, while ۲۴ thousand ,pens were ready to write down, Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) said

I have heard my father – that competent servant of God – Musa b. Ja'far (a.s.) saying" that he heard from his father Ja'far b. Muhammad al-Sadiq (a.s.) saying that he heard his father Muhammad b. 'Ali (a.s.) saying that he heard from his father 'Ali b. al-Husayn (a.s.) saying that he heard from his father al-Husayn b. 'Ali (a.s.) saying that he heard from his father 'Ali b. 'Abi Talib (a.s.) saying that he heard from the Holy Prophet (S) saying that he heard from Gabriel saying that Allah told him: 'I am God. There is no god but Me. Worship Me then. The phrase La ilaha illa Allah

is My fortress, whoever sincerely utters it, may enter My fortress, and whoever enters My fortress shall be secure from My punishment'. When they moved on, the Imam (a.s.) said out loud: 'There are certain conditions to this (the entrance to the fortress) and I am one of its conditions."(1)

Healing a Sick Person in Rubat Sa'd

A caravan from Khurasan was on its way to Kerman when it was attacked by the highwaymen in the mountains near Kerman. They held up the man whom they thought possessed a lot of wealth and tortured him so that he might save his life by giving out his properties.

They kept him in snow and filled his mouth with snow, until a woman freed him from bondage and he managed to escape, but his mouth and tongue had become so numb that he could hardly talk.

In Khurasan, he heard that Imam al-Ridha is in Nayshabur. In a dream he heard someone telling him: "The son of the Apostle of Allah is in Khurasan, tell him about your illness to suggest some medicine to you to heal."

The man said, "In my dream, I went to the Imam and told him my story. His holiness told me to grind cumin, thyme, and salt and put the mixture in my mouth and I would be cured!"

When he woke up he set out for Nayshabur without following the instructions or telling anyone about it. At the entrance to Nayshabur, he was told that Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) had left the city and

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۱- 'Uyun Akhbar al-Ridha (a.s.), vol. ۲, p. ۱۳۲, (a combination of traditions ۱, ۲, ۳, and ۴).

.was in Rubat Sa'd

He went to the Imam and (with much difficulty) told him what he wished. His holiness said, "Did I not instruct you in your dream what to do? Go and get that medicine." The man said, "Tell me again if possible!" Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) repeated that same .instruction; the man used the medicine and was cured

Abu Hamid Ahmad b. 'Ali al-Tha'alibi said, "I heard from Abu Ahmad 'Abd Allah b. 'Abd al-Rahman, also known as Safwan, who said that he saw that man and heard this (story from him personally.(١

(Dihsurkh (al-Hamra'

On his way from Nayshabur to Tus, Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) arrived in Dehsurkh or Al-Hamra' village. 'Abd al-Salam b. Salih al-Hiravi (Aba Salt) said, "The people told Imam '.al-Ridha (a.s.): 'O son of the Apostle of Allah! It is prayer time

The Imam dismounted the camel and said, 'Bring some water.' They said, 'We have no water with us.' His holiness dug the ground with his own hands and water flew out so much as he and those with him performed ablution; and the trace there is still (visible today."(٢

While passing through Dihsurkh toward Tus, his holiness passed by the mountain (called Kuhsangi, from which they make stone pots today) and said, "O God! Please bless this mountain, make it useful to people, and bless what they make from it." Then he ordered some pots to be made from it for him, and said, "Do not cook any food for ".me unless you cook it in these pots

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.Uyun Akhbar al-Ridha (a.s.), vol. ٢, p. ٤٥٨' -١

.Uyun Akhbar al-Ridha (a.s.), vol. ٢, p. ٣٧٦' -٢

.His holiness used to eat slowly; he would also eat very little

From then on, the people found their way to it and made stone pots from it; and God gave blessings to that mountain for the Imam's prayer.(١)

Tus

Then, in continuing his journey, Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) arrived in Tus and stayed in the house of Humayd b. Qahtaba(٢), which was a big garden where Harun's grave, was located. That was the place where the Imam had frequently talked about and informed about his being buried there. When his holiness entered the house, he went by the grave of Harun, drew a line on one side of the grave, and said, "This is the place of my tomb; I will be buried here and soon Allah will cause this place to be frequented by my followers (Shi'as) and friends.

By God, if a Shi'a pays a pilgrimage to me and sends greeting upon me, they will certainly benefit from our – the Ahl al-Bayt's – intercession and the mercy and forgiveness by Allah."

Then, his holiness turned his face toward Qibla, said prayer, and made supplication; then, he made prostration in which he recited ٥٠٠ tasbih (saying subhan Allah = Glorious is Allah) and then left the place.(٣)

Sarakhs

It is implied from some reports that his holiness Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) had been under close surveillance in this town, where nobody had been allowed to meet him. In the following report, the Imam's house is construed as a prison.

'Abd al-Salam b. al-Salih said, "I

١- Ibid.

٢- A governor and general of the Abbasid period, died in Khurasan in ١٥٩/٧٧٥. (Encyclopedia of the World of Islam)

.Uyun Akhbar al-Ridha (a.s.), vol. ۲, p. ۳۷۶‘ -۳

went to the door of the house where Imam al-Ridha was under home arrest (incarcerated) and asked the guard to get in. He said it was not possible. I asked the reason. He said, ‘because he performs a thousand rak‘as of prayers every night and ’.day

And then he went on to tell a little more of the quality of his holiness’ acts of devotion. I told him: ‘Ask his holiness to grant me permission to meet him.’ He went in and asked permission for me. I got in and saw his holiness sitting in his prayer niche, deliberating. I said, ‘O son of the Prophet (S), what is it that the people are quoting from you?’ He ”!asked: ‘What is that?’ I said, ‘They quote you as saying that “people are our slaves

,His holiness said

O Allah! Originator of the heavens and the earth, Knower of the sensible and the” ,(Unseen... (Qur'an: ۳۹/۴۶

O Aba Salt! You are witnessing that I have never said this, nor have I heard any of my .forefathers to have said so

You know the tyrannies that this umma have imposed upon us; these words are of the same tyrannies.” Then, he said, “O ‘Abd al-Salam, if as they say people are our ”?slaves, who are we inviting them to

I said, “O son of the Apostle of Allah (S) you are right.” His holiness said, “O ‘Abd al-Salam, do you deny, as others do, what the Exalted Allah has made incumbent upon you concerning

our Wilaya [and Imamate]?" I said, "I take refuge in God! No, I acknowledge your (Wilaya."(1)

However, the Imam's incarceration in his journey to Marv seems to be improbable in view of Ma'mun's plot for heir apparency, his apparent honoring the Imam, and his .recommendations for respecting his holiness

However, it is possible that the narrator has construed certain limitations imposed on the Imam as incarceration; or, as some others have presumed, this incidence had taken place during the Imam's next trip, i.e. his return from Marv, when Ma'mun's .policies had changed

Concerning Imam al-Ridha's (a.s.) leaving Sarakhs, Ahmad b. al-'Ubayd says: "My grandfather said, 'I was appointed to serve Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) while he was in Nayshabur and escorted him until a day's journey (manzel) after Sarakhs and .intended to escort him to Marv

One manzel after Sarakhs, his holiness took his head out of the camel litter and said, 'O servant of God! Go back! You have fulfilled your duty about us and treated us well; there is no fixed distance for escorting (that is to say, you have been rightly (rewarded.)...(2)

Marv

Having endured a four months' journey, Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) eventually arrived in Marv in the first half of the year ۲۰۱/۸۱۶.(3) When Imam al-Ridha arrived in Marv, the people welcomed him warmly and with great enthusiasm to the extent that Marv had .never witnessed such joy and excitement to that day

Huge crowds thronged on the outskirts of the city to welcome him. After passing through the dense crowds

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.Uyun Akhbar al-Ridha (a.s.), vol. ۲, p. ۴۲۶' -۱

۲- Athar wa Akhbar-i Imam Ridha (a.s.); see: Jughrafiya-yi Tarikhi Hijrat-i Imam Ridha (a.s.), p. ۱۵۱.

۳- Uyun Akhbar al-Ridha (a.s.), vol. ۲, p. ۱۴۹.

of people, the Imam (a.s.) settled in a house near the state palace that had been prepared for him.(1)

The Issue of Heir Apparency

After Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) arrived in Marv in ٢٠١/٨١٦ at the insistence of Ma'mun and his frequent letters of invitations to him and his rejecting the excuses that the Imam made, Ma'mun first offered him the caliphate and told him: "O son of the Apostle of Allah! I am aware of your excellence, erudition, asceticism, piety, and devotedness and consider you as more deserving of the caliphate than myself."

Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) said, "I take pride in my devotion and servitude to Allah, hoping to be secure from the torment of the Hereafter by asceticism in this world, to gain profits by minding the unlawful, and to achieve high standing before Allah through humility in this world." Ma'mun said, "I am of the opinion to resign from caliphate and leave it to you and swear allegiance to you!"

Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) said, "If this caliphate is rightfully yours and Allah has assigned it to you, it is not permissible for you to take off the garment that Allah has clothed you with and give it to another one; and if you have no rights in caliphate, you are not permissible to give me what is not yours."

Ma'mun said, "O son of the Apostle of Allah! You have to accept this task." His holiness said, "I never do this voluntarily."

For a long time Ma'mun kept on insisting until he got disappointed in his

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1- Al-Irshad, vol. ٢, p. ٢٥٠.

holiness and said to him: “If you do not accept caliphate and do not wish me to swear allegiance to you, then be my heir apparent so that you become the caliph after my death.”

Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) said, “By God, my father heard from his forefathers who heard from Commander of the Faithful that the Apostle of Allah (S) said that I would depart from the world before you do, while I will be tyrannically killed with poison and the angels of the heaven will cry over me, and I will be buried in a strange land near Harun’s tomb.”

Ma’mun cried and said, “O son of the Apostle of Allah! Who would kill you or would be able to harm you so long as I am alive?”

His holiness said, “I would say who will kill me if I wished to.”

Ma’mun said, “O son of the Apostle of Allah! By saying this, you intend to lighten burden and take it off your shoulders so that the people say that you are an ascetic in the world!”

Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) said, “By God, since my Almighty and Glorious Lord created me, I have not told a lie, and I have never abstained from the world for the sake of [profiting from] the world; and I know what your intention is.”

Ma’mun said, “What is my intention?” His holiness said, “Am I really safe?” Ma’mun said, “You are safe.” The Imam said, “You want the people to say that ‘Ali b. Musa al-Ridha was not

uninterested in the world; rather, it was the world that was uninterested in him; do ".you not see that he accepted heir apparency to assume the caliphate

At this moment Ma'mun became furious and said, "You always make me encounter .with what disturbs me and remain safe from my anger

I swear by God that you will accept the heir apparency or I will force you to, otherwise, I will cut your head off." Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) said, "The Almighty and Glorious Allah has forbidden me from putting myself to death with my own hands. If it is so, do whatever you like to do; I will accept, provided that I would –neither install nor dismiss anyone, nor change any rules or procedures, and just be an advisor from ".a distance

(Ma'mun accepted these conditions and appointed his holiness as his heir apparent.(١

It is related in some traditions that the Imam said, "O God! You have prohibited me from putting myself to death; if I do not accept his heir apparency, I will be few steps away from death [i.e., to be killed] by him; I am compelled and distressed... O God! There is no pledge of allegiance except to You; there is no guardianship except from You; help me succeed in establishing Your religion and reviving the Sunna of Your Prophet; You are the Mawla and Helper, and the best Mawla and Helper as you are." Then, while weeping and sorrowful, he accepted the heir apparency with the above-(mentioned conditions.(٢

After Imam

.Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۴٩, p. ١٢٨ -١

.Ibid, vol. ٢٩, p. ١٣١ -٢

al-Ridha (a.s.) accepted the heir apparency in this manner, Ma'mun ordered that his son 'Abbas, his commanders, judges, servants, and children all come and swear .allegiance to the Imam

He spent a lot of properties to content the commanders; all agreed except three of them called Jalludi, 'Ali b. 'Imran, and Abu Musa (or Abu Yunus) who did not swear .allegiance to the Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) and Ma'mun sent them to prison

The allegiance ceremony was held most splendidly, coins were minted in the name of .his holiness, and sermons were delivered on the pulpits

Fulfillment of Pledge

Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) said, "One day Ma'mun told me: 'O Abu al-Hasan! I would like you to write a letter to some of your devotees in this region who have rebelled against us. ('.(Meaning: 'You would ask your followers among the rebels to give up their revolting

I told him: 'O Amir! If you fulfill the pledge by which I entered this task – that I may not .command, nor install or dismiss anyone – I will fulfill [your request], too

This heir apparency did not bring me any blessings; I was in Medina and my handwriting (command) was influential in the East and West; I would ride on my steed and pass through the alleys and no one was more respected there than I was. No one would ask me a favor that I was able to do, unless I would do it. Ma'mun said, 'I will (fulfill that pledge."(۱

The Abbasid Ma'mun and his Ominous Objectives

point

The Abbasid Ma'mun, named 'Abd

.Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۴۹, p. ۱۵۵ from al-Kafi -۱

Allah son of Harun al-Rashid, whose mother was an ugly slave-girl called Marajil who served in Harun's court, was born in ۱۷۰/۷۸۶ – the year his father took over caliphate – and died at the age of ۴۸ in ۲۱۸/۸۳۳, i.e., fifteen years after Imam al-Ridha's (a.s.) .martyrdom

His mother died at his birth and Ma'mun left him with Ja'far b. Yahya al-Barmaki to be trained. His instructor was Fadhl b. Sahl who was famous as Dhu al-Riyasatayn and .later on became Ma'mun's vizier. He was killed by Ma'mun in a bath-house in Sarakhs

Contrary to Amin, Ma'mun lived an industrious life far from welfare; he became skillful in various sciences and more learned in jurisprudence and theology than all other .caliphs

In his predictions about the Abbasid caliphs, Imam 'Ali (a.s.) said about him: "The seventh among them will be the most erudite of all."(۱)

Ma'mun's Problems

It was obvious that Ma'mun was not in an ideological and spiritual mindset to hand over the caliphate to another person, since he had made great efforts in obtaining it, and had even killed his brother Amin to this end; other incidents clearly confirm this .issue

Thus, the reason for his offering the caliphate to the Imam and his insistence on his offer is to be taken as his cunning policies and plots; and the main reason is considered to be the problems he was facing, which he thought he had no choice to avoid in order to preserve his rule, except by offering the heir apparency. The

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۱- Ibn Shahrashub, Manaqib, vol. ۲, p. ۲۷۶.

:problems he faced were

He was considered a rebel by the people, especially by the Abbasids, who revolted .۱ .despite Harun's will and murdered his brother Amin, who was formally the caliph

Originally, he was not of adequate nobility, as his mother was a non-Arab slave-girl .۲ who lacked social distinction, contrary to Amin, whose mother, Zubayda Hashimi, was .a learned woman

Members of Ma'mun's inner circle were mostly Iranians, an issue with which the .۳ .Arabs, especially, the Abbasids were dissatisfied

The Alawis ('Alawiyan), who were very influential in Iran and particularly in . ۴ Khurasan and were dissatisfied with the Abbasids, especially with Ma'mun's father whose hands were stained with many of the Alawis' blood, would rise up in revolution in different regions; Abu al-Saraya in Kufa, Zayd b. Musa in Basra, Muhammad b. Ja'far in Mecca and Hejaz, Ibrahim Musa in Yemen, Muhammad b. Sulayman in .Medina, Ja'far b. Zayd b. 'Ali in Wasit, Muhammad b. Isma'il in Mada'in, etc

Ma'mun was very worried of Imam al-Ridha's (a.s.) influence among the Shi'as and .۵ Iranians who were loyal to him and wanted to keep his holiness under surveillance by .any means possible

In order to control the situations and to solve the problems, he thought by conferring heir apparency to Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) he could remove the main part of his problems by controlling the Alawis' revolts, legitimizing his rule, and ensuring the Iranians' :consent. This had several benefits for him

Suppressing the Alawis' revolt; ۲. Legitimizing his rule by means of Imam al-Ridha's .۱

a.s.) joining the court; ٣. Attracting the attention of the Iranians who were advocates) of the Alawis; ۴. Keeping Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) under surveillance and becoming secure of his holiness' probable actions (against his rule); ۵. Reducing Imam al-Ridha's (a.s.) prestige by getting him involved in the problems of the rule (hukuma) and ruining his .spiritual reputation by presenting a profane and secular picture of him

Having been forcefully submitted to heir apparency, Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) acted in a way that Ma'mun's sinister plot resulted in his own loss and made him repent of what .he had done

The actions his holiness took were divisible into the following instances: ١. Refusing to accept heir apparency for some time to the extent that Ma'mun forced his holiness to accept it. ٢. Making the acceptance of heir apparency conditional on non-interference in rulership. ٣. Widespread scientific and cultural activities towards the promotion of the Ahl al-Bayt's (a.s.) school of thought. ۴. Expressing the power of wilaya and Imamate by presenting clear miracles. ۵. Frequent protests against Ma'mun and his .opinions on different occasions

Id al–Fitr Prayer'

One of the significant events during the era of Imam al-Ridha's (a.s.) heir apparency is .the Imam's setting off to perform the 'Id al-Fitr prayer

Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) told him: "There were certain conditions set forth between you and me, on which I accepted this matter (i.e. I set the conditions that I would not ."(interfere in the rule's affairs

Ma'mun said, "I just wanted to reassure the people and the troops

and those rendering services and make them aware of what Allah has made you superior in." He kept insisting until his holiness said, "I would rather you spare me; otherwise, I would set off (for 'Id al-Fitr prayer) the same way as the Apostle of Allah (S) and 'Ali b. Abi Talib (a.s.) did.

Ma'mun said, "Set off as you wish."

In the morning, when people found out that Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) would set out for 'Id prayer, a throng of people, man and woman, young and old, filled up the lanes and rooftops; commanders had also gathered in the Imam's house.

At sunrise, Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) performed a ghusl (major ablution) and while having a white turban on and having one end let down his chest and the other between his two shoulder blades, stood up and addressed his followers: "Do as I did." Then, while holding a walking stick in hand, he came out, raised his head to the sky, and said takbirs (God is the greatest) in such a way that we thought the air and the walls were responding to his holiness.

Having put on their best clothes, the commanders and the people dismounted their horses and took off their shoes as soon as they saw his holiness and the entourage in that state. It is related in a tradition that some even had to cut off their footwear laces (with a knife.(١)

The Imam (a.s.) stood next to the door and said out loud: "Allahu akbar 'ala ma

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١- Muntaha al-Amal vol. ٢.

hadana....” And those present repeated; the sound of the crowd’s crying and shouting .sent tremor through the city of Marv

His holiness started to move on and after every ten steps he would pause and say three takbirs in a way that the heaven and the earth would respond to him. Fadhl b. Sahl – Ma’mun’s vizier and commander of army – said to him: “If (Imam) al-Ridha goes on to say prayer like this, the people will be fascinated and deceived by him. You had better ask him to return.” Ma’mun sent someone to the Imam to ask him to (return. The Imam put on his shoes and returned.(۱

The Story of Di‘bil al-Khuza’i

Di‘bil al-Khuza‘i is one of the famous poets of Imam al-Ridha’s (a.s.) era. He went to the presence of his holiness and said, “O son of the Apostle of Allah! I have composed a lyric poem about you and I have sworn not to recite it for anyone except after I read ”.it to you

His holiness said, “Read it!” and Di‘bil started to recite his famous poem that begins :with the following lines

,[The schools of Divine signs are left devoid of recitation [of the Qur’an

.And the descending place of Revelation has become slack and worn-out

After expressing the oppressed state of the Ahl al-Bayt (a.s.) and their deprivation :from their own rights, he went on with the poem

,I see their spoils are being divided among others

.And their hands are empty of what is theirs

,At this moment Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) wept and said

p: ۱۰۱

.Kulayni, Usul al-Kafi, Kitab al-Hujja, vol. ۲, p.۴۰۷ -۱

:O Khuza‘i! You told the truth.” Di‘bil continued until he got to these lines“

;I was apprehensive in the world and in its time of striving

.And I hope to be safe after I die

Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) told him: “May Allah keep you safe in that Great Dread [on the Resurrection Day]. Then, Di‘bil pointed out the dispersion of the Ahl al-Bayt’s (a.s.) :graves until he got to the following poem

[And a grave in Baghdad [that is, Imam al-Kazim’s (a.s.) grave

For a purified soul that the Merciful God has encompassed him in chambers [of .[Paradise

Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) said, “Shall I add two couplets to this stanza to make your poems ”?perfect

”!Di‘bil said, “Yes. O son of the Apostle of Allah

,The Imam (a.s.) said

And there is a grave in Tus; what a tragedy

That sets the hearts on fire that will be burning

,(Till the Resurrection until God will raise the Qa’im (the awaited Imam

.Who will relieve us of our sorrows and tribulations

Di‘bil said, “O son of the Apostle of Allah! Whose is this grave that is in Tus?” His holiness answered: “It is my grave. In the near future, however, Tus will become the .frequenting place of my Shi‘as and visitors

Indeed, whoever visits (makes a pilgrimage to) me in my desolation in Tus will be with .me in the same rank on the Resurrection Day, while having been forgiven

Imam al-Ridha’s (a.s.) Gift to Di‘bil

When Di'bil finished reciting the poems, Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) told him to stay on and went into the house. After a while, the Imam's servant

brought one hundred Radhawi dinars (which were minted in the name of his holiness) and said to Di'bil: "My master says spend these for your journey expenses."

Di'bil said, "I swear by God that I did not come for this and I did not write my poems for a reward." He gave back the money bag and asked the Imam to give him one of his garments to get blessed by it.

Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) sent back the money along with a robe and told the servant: "Tell him to take this bag, as he is soon going to need it."

Di'bil took the bag and the robe and left for Marv with a caravan. When they reached Mayan Qawhan, the highway robbers waylaid and plundered the caravan and took all the people of the caravan as captives, including Di'bil.

The robbers were busy dividing the booty while one of them was reciting the couplet:

"I see their spoils are being divided among others,

And their hands are empty of what is theirs."

(And this was the very poem that Di'bil had written!)

Di'bil asked him: "Who said this poem?" The man answered: "Someone from Khuza'a named Di'bi b. 'Ali." Then Di'bil said, "I am Di'bil."

The robber rushed to his chief and informed him of what had happened. The chief came to Di'bil and said, "Are you Di'bil?" he said, "Yes." The man told him to recite his poem and Di'bil did so.

The chief of the robbers ordered Di'bil and all others to be freed and gave

.them back their properties out of respect for Diʿbil

Diʿbil continued with his journey until he reached Qum. People of Qum asked Diʿbil to recite his poem. He told them to gather in the grand mosque, and when they did, he recited the poem. People of Qum gave him a lot of money and gifts as sila (prize given .(to a poet

Then, the people happened to get informed of the robe that Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) had given to him. They asked him to sell that robe to them for a thousand dinars. Diʿbil did not accept. They said, "Sell a piece of that to us for a thousand dinars." He refused and .left Qum

In one of the villages near Qum, a group of Arab youths grabbed the robe from him. .Diʿbil went back to Qum and asked them to return the robe

The youth refused; they even did not listen to their elderly and told De'bel: "We do not give back the robe; take a thousand dinars for it, instead." Diʿbil did not accept, but as he got hopeless, he asked them to give him a piece of it. They agreed and gave him a .piece of the garment along with a thousand dinars

Diʿbil returned home and found out that the burglars had stolen all his furniture. He sold the hundred dinars that Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) had given to him to the Shiʿas for one hundred dirhams each. Thus he obtained ten hundred dirhams and recalled that the Imam had

.said, “You are soon going to need it

The Healing Robe

Diʽbil had a handmaiden who was very dear to him. She was afflicted with severe eye disease. The physicians said her right eye was incurable and is lost, but they would try .to cure her left eye

Diʽbil got very sad and restless, until he remembered the piece of cloth from the robe that the Imam (a.s.) had given to him; he rubbed it to her eyes and tied it to her head .before she slept at night

When the morning came, her eyes were cured and even healthier than before with (the blessings of Imam al-Ridha (a.s.).(١

Ma'mun's Disappointment, Problems, and New Policy

After the event of Imam al-Ridha's (a.s.) heir apparency, Ma'mun encountered some problems the he had not foreseen so that he got caught in the traps he had set for .(.Imam al-Ridha (a.s

These problems include the presence of Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) in scientific circles and his discussions with the dignitaries from among the Jews and Christians and other groups and his indisputable triumph over them, leading to the dissemination of the scholarship, piety, spirituality, and praiseworthy morality of his holiness among the people; the Imam's various endeavors in different fields that indicated his mistrust and disbelief in the ruling system; the displeasure of the Abbasids and their dignitaries with Ma'mun who had killed the then caliph, Amin, and more importantly that he had appointed Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) as his heir apparent, which would pave the way for the transformation of hukuma from the Abbasids to the Alawis

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.Uyun Akhbar al-Ridha (a.s.), vol. ٢, p. ٢۶٧; Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۴٩, ٢٣٨' -١

leading to the rise of dissidence by the Abbasids which was mainly exemplified in the revolt of the people of Baghdad against Ma'mun and his dismissal and swearing allegiance to Ibrahim b. Mahdi, also known as Ibn Shakla.(۱)

Groups and tribes other than the Abbasids and Alawis also sparked the unrest in such a way that it created much anarchy and rebellion almost causing the overthrow of his rule.(۲)

The First Step, Killing Fadhl b. Sahl

Since Ma'mun found his policy failed, he decided to reconsider it, turning from political to military action. To this end, he set out for Baghdad so as to appease the dissident Abbasids and restore peace in there.

It is said that in his first step he decided to murder Fadhl b. Sahl, his trainer, vizier, and chief of armed forces, the one who had made great attempts to strengthen Ma'mun, whose caliphate was indebted to his policy and sincere measures.

The story goes that, upon Ma'mun's decision, Fadhl b. Sahl came to Marv in order to set out for Baghdad and Ma'mun ordered four of his agents to kill him incognito in the bath-house. After the order was executed, Ma'mun, to evade murder charge, ordered his men to mobilize for finding the murderers of Sahl and set a prize for their arrest.(۳)

He finally charged those four agents with murder, executed them, and sent their heads to his brother Hasan b. Sahl for condolences.(۴) Thus, this was the first step he took toward pleasing the Abbasids, for Fadhl b. Sahl was one of

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۱- Tabari, ۷/۱۴۰.

۲- Ibn Khaldun, Muqaddima, ۱/۴۰۵.

۳- Tabari, ۷/۱۴۸.

۴- Muhadhirat Ta'rikh al-Umam al-Islamiyya, p. ۱۸۲; see: Imam 'Ali b. Musa al-Ridha (a.s.), p. ۱۶۵.

.the main culprits of transferring caliphate to the Alawis

It is related in some traditions that Hasan b. Sahl had asked his brother Fadhl to go to the bath-house with Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) and Ma'mun and bleed by cupping so that !the blood may fend off the ill-fatedness that had been augured for him

When he sent this request to Ma'mun and the latter asked Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) to go to the bath-house with him, his holiness answered: "I do not go to the bath-house .tomorrow and I do not consider it to be in your best interest to go, either

It is not in the best interest of Fadhl either to go to bath tomorrow." And as Ma'mun insisted his holiness said, "I saw the Apostle of Allah tonight in a dream who told me: 'O 'Ali! Do not go to the bath-house and I do not see it in your interest that you and .Fadhl go to bath-house." And Ma'mun consented

After sunset, Imam al-Ridha said, "Say we take refuge in God from the evil being descended tonight." After the Morning Prayer he said, "Say we take refuge in God from what is being descended tonight..." Near the sunrise, his holiness told his .servant, Yasir, to go on the rooftop to see if he hears anything

He said, "When I went on the rooftop, I heard wailing and mourning." At this moment Ma'mun entered and told his holiness: "My master! May God reward you concerning Fadhl; they killed him in the

bath-house! Soldiers and officers and loyalists of Fadhl gathered in Ma'mun's house ".and said, "Ma'mun has assassinated him

They had brought fire to set the door of Mann's house on fire (and enter it). Ma'mun requested Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) to go to the people, if he deemed advisable, to disperse them. His holiness went to his house door and found the people thronging .there

He waved them to disperse and they all dispersed. By God, the people went away in such a hurry that they stumbled on each other; whomever he waved to would run to (leave.(١

Imam al-Ridha's (a.s.) Murderer

Anyway, the killing of Fadhl b. Sahl was a great step toward appeasement of the Abbasids but it was definitely not enough, since their protest was mainly aimed at Imam al-Ridha's (a.s.) heir apparency, which had disappointed the Abbasids. For this .reason, Ma'mun decided to get rid of his holiness

He had to execute this plot in such a skillful way that he would not only be accused but also would benefit from the martyrdom of the Imam (a.s.); and that was why he plotted the matter so cunningly that even some historians were mistaken or doubtful (about his being involved in murdering Imam al-Ridha (a.s.).(٢

Ma'mun left Marv for Baghdad. He killed Fadhl b. Sahl in the bath-house in Sarakhs and left for Tus to set out for Baghdad from there. He lingered for a while near his father's tomb in Tus to execute his ominous plot to martyr Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) and set the

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.(.Usul al-Kafi, vol. ٢, p. ۴٠۶ and 'Uyun Akhbar al-Ridha (a.s -١

.Cf. Al-Sayyid 'Ali b. Tawus and Al-Irbili, Bihar al-Anwar, vol.۴٩, p. ٣١١ -٢

.minds of the Abbasids' dissidents at ease in this respect before getting to Baghdad

Islamic traditions and historical reports all denote the criminal role of the Abbasid Ma'mun in Imam al-Ridha's (a.s.) martyrdom. Imam 'Ali (a.s.) had said, "A man from among my descendants will be wrongfully poisoned to death; his name is my name, and his father's name is the name of Musa b. 'Imran. Let it be known that whoever visits (makes a pilgrimage to) him in his desolation, God will forgive their sins...(١)

Similarly, Imam al-Kazim (a.s.) said, "My son, 'Ali, will be wrongfully poisoned to death and buried next to Harun; whoever visits (makes a pilgrimage to) him is like the one who has made a pilgrimage to the Prophet (S).(٢)

Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) himself said, "By God, there is no one among us who will not be killed as martyr." They asked: "O son of the Apostle of Allah! Who will kill you?" His holiness answered: "The most mischievous of God's creatures in my time will poison me to death."(٣)

(.Unsuccessful Assassination of Imam al-Ridha (a.s

It is reported through some narrations that once Ma'mun appointed some of his retainers with sharp and poisoned swords to attack Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) by night and cut his body into pieces. He offered them large rewards for this task and for .concealing it

They (apparently) performed the task and reported back to Ma'mun, imagining that they had killed the Imam. The next day, Ma'mun appeared in a distressed and disheveled appearance pretending to be mourning for the

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.Wasa'il al-Shi'a, vol. ١٠, chapter ٨٢, Al-Mazar, hadith ٩ -١

.Ibid, vol. ٢١ -٢

.Uyun Akhbar al-Ridha (a.s.), vol. ٢, p. ٢٥۶' -٣

Imam, but when his courier notified him that the Imam is alive and well, he went pale, changed his clothes, and ordered to announce that the Imam had passed out and now has come to his senses. Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) said, "By God, these tricks are of no avail as long as what has been destined to come true.(۱)

Imam al-Ridha's (a.s.) Martyrdom

His holiness was under such heavy pressure and hardship that when he would return from the Friday Prayers, sweating and dusty, he would raise his hands to the sky and say: "O God! If my relief from what I am in lies in my death, hasten my death at this very moment!" He was constantly remorseful and discomforted until he passed away.(۲)

The night before his martyrdom, he sent for Harthama(۳) and told him: "Listen to what I say and memorize it; the time has now come for my return to God; it is time for me to join my ancestor and forefathers.

This rebel (Ma'mun) has decided to poison me with grapes and pomegranate; he has poisoned the grapes with thread and needle and will have the pomegranate seeded by a servant with poisoned hands. Tomorrow, he will call me in to eat from them and the destiny will be fulfilled..."(۴)

It is further related in the hadith that after the Imam's (a.s.) martyrdom, when Harthama told Ma'mun about the grapes and pomegranate, the latter's face now turned pale, now red, and then black, until he passed out and at

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۱- Uyun Akhbar al-Ridha (a.s.), vol. ۲, p. ۲۱۵.

۲- Ibid, p. ۱۴.

۳- Harthama b. Aʿyan was a governor of the Abbasid period, a native of Khurasan. Fadhl b. Sahl, who had been described by Harthama as a majus accused him of committing acts of tyranny, had him arrested and imprisoned, with the caliph's approval and put him to death in Dhu 'l-Qaʿda ۲۰۰/June ۸۱۶. Thus the above mentioned

(.Harthama must be someone other than this famous Harthama b. A'yan. (trans

.Uyun Akhbar al-Ridha (a.s.), vol. ۲, p. ۲۴۸ -۴

the same time saying out loud: “Woe be to Ma’mun from God, Woe be to Ma’mun from the Prophet, Woe be to Ma’mun from ‘Ali b. Abi Talib, Woe be to Ma’mun from ...,Fatimat al-Zahra

And when he came to his senses, he told to Harthama: “I swear by God, neither you nor anyone else on the face of the earth or in heaven is dearer to me than Ridha; I swear by God that if I hear that you have told anyone else what you have heard from him, your death will be in that. Harthama promised that if he revealed anything, shedding his blood would be allowed for Ma’mun, who then made him swear and make a covenant to conceal it.(١)

Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) said to Aba Salt: “Go to the Harun’s dome and bring a fistful of dust from each of its four corners. When Aba Salt returned with the dust, his holiness smelled the dust from behind the head corner and let it fall to the ground and said, ‘Ma’mun wants to bury me here; but there will emerge a huge stone that if all the picks in Khurasan are brought here, they will not be able to move this stone.

Then, he smelled the dust taken from the upper part and the lower part [of the grave] and uttered the same words; and when he smelled the dust from the Qibla direction (in front of the Harun’s tomb), he said, ‘Here they will dig up a

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١- Ibid, p. ٢٥٣.

’...grave for me

Then he said, ‘O Aba Salt! Tomorrow I will go to this wicked sinner; if I came out with bare head, talk to me as I will answer; but if I came out with covered head, do not talk to me as I will not answer.”

Aba Salt said, “The next day his holiness put on his clothes and sat in his prayer niche waiting until Ma’mun’s retainer came and summoned the Imam (a.s.). His holiness set off and I went along with him.

There was a basket of grapes and other fruits before Ma’mun and there was a bunch of grapes in his hands, some of which he had already eaten. As soon as he saw Imam al-Ridha (a.s.), he rose to his feet, hugged the Imam, kissed him on his forehead, and seated him in his own place. Then he offered the grapes to his holiness and said,

‘O son of the Apostle of Allah! I have seen no better grapes than this.’ His holiness answered: ‘It is likely that the grapes are from the Paradise!’

Ma’mun said, ‘Eat from them.’ The Imam said, ‘Spare me.’ Ma’mun responded. ‘There is no way. Why don’t you eat? Are you accusing me or suspicious of me?’ His holiness took the bunch and picked three grapes and threw the rest on the ground and stood up.

Ma’mun said, ‘Where are you going?’ The Imam said, ‘Where you have sent me to.’ Then, while his head was covered, came out and I

Aba Salt) did not talk to him. His holiness entered the house and lay down in his bed) .and ordered the house door to be closed

I closed the door and sadly lingered on in the courtyard. All of a sudden I saw a charming black-haired youth who looked most like Imam al-Ridha (a.s.). I went toward him and said, 'How did you come in through the closed door?' he said, 'The One who brought me here from Medina at this moment, the same One took me in the '.house through the closed door

I asked who he was. He said, 'I am the proof of Allah to you O Aba Salt! I am .Muhammad b. 'Ali (Imam al-Jawad).' Then, he went to his noble father

As soon as Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) saw his son, he rose to his feet, hugged him, and kissed him on his forehead and showered kisses on him, talked to him in secret (about Imamate) that I did not understand... Then, his blessed soul joined the Garden of .Divine pleasure

Imam al-Jawad (a.s.) began to perform the funeral ablution for his father. I wanted to help, he said, 'There are some with me who would help.' Then he said, Go inside bring '.the coffin and the shroud and balm

He clad his father's body in shroud and performed the burial prayer over it.' Then, he said, 'Bring in the coffin.' I said, 'Shall I go to the carpenter to have a coffin made?' He said, 'No, go to

’!the inner house, there is a coffin

When I went inside, I saw a coffin that I had not seen there before. He laid the body in the coffin and performed two rak‘as of prayer; then, all of a sudden the ceiling !opened up and the coffin ascended through the ceiling

I said, ‘O son of the Apostle of Allah! Soon, Ma’mun will come and ask me for Ridha, what shall I do?’ he said, ‘Silence! He will come back. O Aba Salt! There is no Prophet who would die in the East and his successor is in the West, unless God would call their ’.(souls and bodies together (i.e., his holiness has been taken to the Prophet

No sooner had his holiness stopped talking than the ceiling reopened and the coffin descended. Imam al-Jawad took the body of his father out of the coffin and laid it on .the bed as if no funeral ablution and shrouding had been performed for it

Then, he said, ‘O Aba Salt! Get up and open the door for Ma’mun.’ I opened the door and saw it was Ma’mun along with his retainers. That cursed devil (who had made sure of the Imam’s martyrdom) entered while crying and tearing his clothes and beating on his head and saying: ‘O my master, you pained my heart by your tragedy.’ (And it happened as Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) had predicted.”(۱

According to more renowned traditions, the martyrdom of his holiness took place in .the month of Safar/September of ۲۰۳/۸۱۸

p: ۱۱۴

(Uyun Akhbar al-Ridha (a.s.), vol. ۲, p. ۲۴۴-۲۴۵. (in brief‘ -۱

(.A Review of the most Important Events during the Imamate of Imam al-Ridha (a.s

.In ۱۸۶/۷۹۹, Imam Musa b. Ja'far (a.s.) was martyred

In ۱۸۴/۸۰۰, Ahmad son of Harun al-Rashid known as Al-Sabti, who practiced asceticism .in the world and was engaged in worship, passed away

In ۱۸۷/۸۰۳, Fudhayl b. 'Ayadh, the ascetic mystic Sufi, died in Mecca. He was famous for his piety and worship. In his early years, Fudhayl was an infamous highway robber; he .would prowl in the night for victims on the road from Abiward to Sarakhs

Between these two cities was a small village in which lived a girl that Fudhayl was in love with. One night, out of desperation to be with her, Fudhayl climbed the wall of her :home. As he was climbing over it, he heard a voice recite

Is it not time yet for those who have faith that their hearts should be humbled for (Allah's remembrance? (Qur'an: ۵۷/۱۶

At that moment, Fudhayl answered, "O my Lord, the time has indeed come." He returned from where he came and sought refuge near a traveling party on the main .road

They were busy engaging in a serious discussion. Fudhayl heard one of them say, "Let us continue our journey now." Another answered, "No, not until the morning, for ".Fudhayl is lurking on the road somewhere out there, just waiting to rob us

Having heard the entire conversation, Fudhayl thought to him, "I go around in the night to sin, while a group of Muslims remain here because they fear me. Indeed I feel that Allah has brought me here to

(them only so that I can reform my character. O Allah, I indeed repent to you..."(1)

In ۱۸۸/۸۰۳, 'Ali b. Hamza, known as Kasa'i, who is renowned in science of syntax, philology, and reading [the Qur'an] and Muhammad b. Hasan Shaybani, the Hanafite jurist, who accompanied Harun in his journey to Tus, both died in Rey, and Harun said ".about them: "We buried jurisprudence and Arabic [language] in Rey

According to some traditions, the eulogist of the Ahl al-Bayt (a.s.) and their accomplished poet, Isma'il b. Muhammad, renowned as Sayyid Humayri died in the .time of Harun al-Rashid

However, it is implied from the ahadith and traditions that he passed away in the time of Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.). He made assiduous attempts in dissemination of the virtues of the Ahl al-Bayt (a.s.) to the extent that no one among the companions of the Imams (a.s.) surpassed him in promulgation of Commander of the Faithful and the Ahl al-Bayt .(.(a.s

He said in Kunasa (a neighborhood of) Kufa: "Whoever relates a virtue of 'Ali (a.s.) for which I have not composed a poem, I will give him this horse with all the things on it. The transmitters of hadith related hadith and Sayyid recited his poems on the related .subjects until a man related a virtue, about which Sayyid had not said any poems

.He fulfilled his promise, and then composed a poem for that virtue

In the reign of Harun a large number of the Alawis and Talibis were killed as martyrs whose names

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See Tadhkirat al-Awliya', p. ۷۹ -۱

and date of martyrdom were not registered due their great number, including Idris b. ‘Abd Allah b. al-Hasan al-Muthanna who had a vast rule in Egypt and Africa and was .cunningly poisoned by Harun

Similarly, some Sadat(۱) such as Yahya b. ‘Abd Allah b. al-Hasan al-Muthanna and his son Muhammad b. Muthanna, and Husayn b. ‘Abd Allah b. Isma’il, a descendent of Ja‘far Tayyar, who was killed due to the wounds of scourge; or ‘Abbas b. Muhammad, a descendent of Imam al-Sajjad (a.s.), who was clubbed to death by the cursed Harun who called him the son of an adulterous woman and he retorted that Harun’s mother was indeed adulterous because she had been a slave girl with whom the slave dealers (had adulterous liaison. Harun got furiously angry and clubbed him to death.(۲

All in all, a great number of Alawis were murdered during the rule of Harun and the story of Humayd b. Qahtaba and the killing of sixty of the Sadat in one night are (recorded in history.(۳

In ۱۸۹/۸۰۴, the prosperity star of the Barmakids, who had been given the authority to run the state, began to die out, and they were wiped out by Harun, with their .condemnatory story being recorded in history as a lesson for others

Ma’mun carried out this plot so cunningly that Ja‘far b. Yahya Barmaki who was Ma’mun’s brother-in-law and very close and dear to him did not have the slightest idea of what would happen until the night that Harun ordered

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(Plural of Sayyid: Descendants of the Prophet (S -۱

.For more information see Maqatil al-Talibiyyin -۲

.Uyun Akhbar al-Ridha (a.s.), vol. ۱, p. ۸۸‘ -۳

.his agent to murder him

When Harun's agent went to his house for executing the order, he (Ja'far) told him: "Ma'mun makes such jokes with me a lot." Finally, it was arranged for him to be taken .to the back part of the Harun's tent and to ask Harun's view again about his murder

When he directly heard the order of his murder, he tied his own handkerchief over his eyes and was beheaded. Surprisingly enough, Harun told the agent who had beheaded Ja'far to summon such and such persons, and when they came in, he told (them: "Behead the agent, as I cannot tolerate to see Ja'far's murderer.(۱

On Saturday ۳ Jamadi II ۱۹۳/۲۴ March ۸۰۹, Harun died in Tus. He ruled as a caliph for ۲۳ years and a few months. He was four months past ۴۴ years old when he died and was buried in the same place that the Holy Shrine of Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) is located now, .about which his holiness had frequently informed

Sometimes he would say: "You will bury me with him in the same room." (۲) At other times he would say: "Tus city will fill the gap between us." (۳) Yet at other times he would say: "I and Harun would be like these two...," joining his middle and index (fingers together.(۴

In this respect, Di'bil has some poems the gist of which is as follows: "There are two graves in Tus, one for the best of the people and the other for the worst

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.Muruj al-Dhahab, ۳/۴۶۵ -۱

.A'lam al-Hidaya, p. ۳۶ -۲

.Ibid, p. ۳۶ -۳

.Ibid -۴

of them; and this in itself is an admonitory lesson; neither that impure will benefit (from that pure one, nor will this pure be harmed by this impure.(١

On Thursday ١٥ Jamadi II ١٩٣/٥ April ٨٠٩, allegiance was secured for Muhammad Amin, Harun's son, who was his heir and was in Baghdad when his father died. His mother, Zubayda, daughter of Ja'far b. Abi Ja'fr Mansur, was among the noble ladies of the .Abbasids

Her monuments, including the construction or the reconstruction of the city of Tabriz and some wells on the way to Mecca, are famous. She had one hundred female slaves who knew the Qur'an by heart. The sound of the Qur'an recitation was heard in her .palace like the sound of the bees. She died in Baghdad in ٢١۶/٨٣١

Qadhi Nur Allah has related in his Majalis al-Mu'minin that Zubayda was a devoted Shi'a, and when Harun found out about her staunch belief, he divorced her and sent her the bill of divorce. Zubayda wrote on the back of the bill: "I am thankful to God for (the previous situation, and now that we are separated I am not regretful."(٢

Eighteen nights had passed since Muhammad Amin's rule when he decided to break his covenant and to dethrone Ma'mun who was introduced as his father's successor during the latter's reign and to make his son, Musa Natiq, the caliph. He consulted the .viziers and commanders, but no one except 'Ali b. 'Isa b. Mahan deemed it advisable

Amin proceeded to

١- Tatimmat al-Muntaha, Khalifat-i Harun.

٢- Tatimmat al-Muntaha.

dethrone Ma’mun and sent a massive army under the command of ‘Ali b. ‘Isa to fight against Ma’mun in Khurasan. Ma’mun, in turn, dispatched four thousand troops under the commandment of Tahir b. Husayn to fight back and the two armies met in battle .near Rey

Being proud of the great number of his troops and having failed to act with foresightedness, the commander of Amin’s army was defeated and killed by Ma’mun’s troops. After this victory, Ma’mun deposed his brother Amin and dispatched .Tahir b. al-Husayn to Baghdad along with Harthamat b. A‘yan

After fighting for a while and besiege of Baghdad, the people of Baghdad became exhausted and withdrew from Amin. Also, Tahir made dignitaries inclined towards .Ma’mun by promising gold and silver to them, and they, in turn, dethroned Amin

Then, Harthama granted safe-conduct to Amin and they met in a small boat; he did much honor to the latter but Tahir sent a group of agents to arrest Amin. They both jumped into the water and the boat got drowned. Harthama and Amin swam away and rescued themselves; however, Amin swam to a spot where Tahir’s troops were .stationed

They arrested Amin and before he could meet Tahir, they killed him on the latter’s .order. This event took place on Saturday night, Muharram ٢٥, ١٩٨/September ٢٥, ٨١٣

Amin was killed on Muharram ٢٥, ١٩٨, at the age of ٣٣. His caliphate lasted about five years and since he was constantly indulged in feasting and drinking, debauchery, and

playing and diversion, and as for a time he was sieged by and engaged in war with Ma'mun's army, he made no objection to the children of Abu Talib (i.e., descendants of .Imam 'Ali – a.s.) and therefore no accident befell them

.In ۱۹۸/۸۱۳, upon the killing of Amin, people of Baghdad swore allegiance to Ma'mun

In the same year, Ma'mun dismissed his brother Qasim b. Rashid from heir .apparency

In ۱۹۹/۸۱۴, Abu al-Saraya Serri b. Mansur Shaybani, who was brave and skilful in battle, rebelled in Kufa and called people to swear allegiance to Muhammad b. Ibrahim (Ibn .Tabataba) and all the Kufans swore allegiance to him

Muhammad thrived in his role as a commander, frequently defeating the caliph's troops, until he died and the people swore allegiance to Muhammad b. Muhammad b. .Zayd b. 'Ali b. al-Husayn and he sent his own governors around

Eventually, Hasan b. Sahl (brother of Fadhl, Ma'mun's vizier) dispatched Harthama to fend him off. He left for Kufa with thirty thousand troops. A bloody war broke out between the armies of Harthama and Abu al-Saraya and Harthama's army was defeated. However, despite Abu al-Saraya's warning concerning the ambush by Harthama's troops while being chased, his troops were ambushed by five thousand troops of the latter's army and once again a battle broke out and Harthama, who had .been captivated, was freed

He deceitfully approached the Kufans by suggesting: "If you wish the rule to get out of the hands of the Abbasids, wait until Monday so that

".we may talk together; whoever is chosen, we will swear allegiance to him

This trick worked and the Kufan army gave up the war, ignoring Abu al-Saraya who was repeatedly shouting: "This is a deceit and they are losing the war; our victory is .near; go on fighting." The Kufans did not take any actions

Finally, he angrily quit the war and gave a lecture on Friday, calling all of them the killers of 'Ali (a.s.) and deserters of Husayn (a.s.) and bitterly reproached them for their disloyalty. Although a group of them became zealous and wanted to take action, but he did not consent and left Kufa along with some others on Sunday night, Muharram .١٣th

On the other hand, Kufa dignitaries asked Harthama for safe-conduct (aman) for the people and he granted it. When the situation calmed down, Harthama went to Baghdad and finally Abu al-Saraya surrendered with safe-conduct and was sent to Hasan b. Sahl, but he killed Abu al-Saraya for his brother's murder, hanging his head .on Western side and his body on the Eastern side of the city

In ٢٠٠/٨١٥, Ma'mun commanded to collect statistics of the Abbasid dynasty, whose .number amounted to ٣٣,٠٠٠

In the same year, the Abbasid Ma'mun dispatched his chief attendant, Raja' b. Abi .Ḍahhak, to Medina to respectfully bring the Imam (a.s.) to Marv

In ٢٠١/٨١۶, the heir apparency of Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) was celebrated in a great ceremony in which the dignitaries, nobles, Sadat, and scholars were gathered. First of all, Ma'mun

ordered his son, 'Abbas, to swear allegiance to his holiness; then, other people swore allegiance and he gave them many prizes and rewards and the orators and poets recited many lyric poems.

Ma'mun, then, ordered the Abbasids to take out the black garments they used to wear and put on green clothes, instead.

In ٢٠١/٨١۶, Hadhrat Fatima Ma'suma, daughter of Imam Musa b. Ja'far, set off from Medina to see her brother, Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) in Marv. She got sick in Sava and inquired how far it was to Qum.

She was told it was ten parasangs. She told her attendant to take her to Qum. More accurately, the Sa'd family came to her and asked her to go to Qum. Musa b. Khazraj, took her camel's halter, led it into Qum, and lodged her in his house.

Her highness stayed in Qum for seventeen days and then passed away. She was buried where her mausoleum is now located in Qum. May Allah's peace and blessing be upon her.

In ٢٠٢/٨١٧, Fadhl b. Sahl (Ma'mun's trainer, vizier, and commander of army and his energetic servant) was murdered in a bath-house in Sarakhs.

In the same year, Malik b. Anas, the chief of Maliki school, died and was buried in Baqi' cemetery in the mausoleum of the Prophet (S)'s wives.(١)

The High Excellence of Visitation (Ziyara) to Imam al-Ridha's (a.s.) Holy Shrine

point

Hamdan b. Ishaq says: "I went to Imam al-Jawad (a.s.) and said, 'What is the reward of the one who visits your father ['s tomb] in Tus?' His holiness said, 'Whoever visits

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١ - The events during the Imamate of Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) are adopted from Muhaddith al-Qummi's Tatimmat al-Muntaha.

".'my father in Tus, Allah will forgive his past and future sins

Hamdan said, "After ziyara of his holiness, I went on to Hajj pilgrimage and met Ayyub b. Nuh; he said, Imam al-Jawad (a.s.) told me: Whoever visits my father's tomb in Tus, Allah will forgive his past sins and the ones that follow and will set up a minbar (pulpit) across from the minbar of Muhammad (S) and 'Ali (a.s.), until He is finished with His .judgments on people

Imam al-Ridha's (a.s.) Intercession

Commander of the Faithful 'Ali (a.s.) said, "A man from among my progeny will be wrongfully murdered in the land of Khurasan; his name is [the same as] my name, his father's name is [like] the name of Musa b, 'Imran's name; let it be known that whoever visits him in his desolation, God will forgive his sins of the past and future, even though they may be as many as the number of the stars, drops of water, and ".leaves of the trees

Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) said, "Whoever visits me while knowing the right that the Exalted Allah has made obligatory for obeying me, I and my forefathers will be his intercessors on the Resurrection Day, and whoever we intercede, will be redeemed .although the sins of man and jinn are upon him

Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) said, "Soon, I will be wrongfully murdered by poison; whoever visits me with spiritual understanding (ma'rifa – admitting my Imamate), Allah will .forgive his past and future sins

(.Aba Salt said, "I was with Imam al-Ridha (a.s

when a group of people arrived in from Qum. They greeted the Imam and his holiness revered them, and then said, "Welcome! You are our real Shi'a; there will come a day that you will visit my grave in Tus; whoever visits me while having performed ghusl (major ablution), will be cleansed of sins as if being born again."

The Pilgrim of Paradise

Imam al-Jawad (a.s.) said, "Whoever visits my father, the Paradise will be his abode." He also said, "I guarantee the Paradise on behalf of God for the one who visits [the Shrine of] my father in Tus while recognizing his rightfulness."

Ali b. Asbat said, "I asked Imam al-Jawad (a.s.): 'What is the reward for the one who visits your father in Khurasan? He said, Paradise, I swear by God. Paradise, I swear by God."

Imam al-Sadiq said, "My grandson will be murdered in the land of Khurasan in a city called Tus; whoever visits him in Tus while recognizing his rightfulness, I will take his hand and let him into Paradise, even though he is a perpetrator of great sins!

It was asked from him: "What is meant by recognizing his rightfulness?" He answered: "To know that he is the Imam whose obedience is obligatory (wajib al-ta'a), he is estranged (gharib) and a martyr..."

The Apostle of Allah said, "Soon, a part of my body will be buried in Khurasan, and whoever from among the believers goes there on pilgrimage, Allah will surely destine them to Paradise, and their body will be forbidden (haram)

.to the Hell-fire

Similarly, Imam al-Kazim (a.s.) said, "Whoever makes a pilgrimage to this son of mine – pointing at Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) – will enter Paradise.

(The Pilgrim of the Prophet (S

Imam al-Sadiq said in a hadith: "Whoever makes a pilgrimage to him (Imam al-Ridha – a.s.) in his desolation and knows that, after his father, he is the Imam whose obedience is obligatory, in the sight of Allah is like the one who has made a pilgrimage to the Apostle of Allah (S)."

Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) said, "There is a buq'a (mausoleum) in Khurasan and there will come a day when it will become the frequenting place of the angels; a group will descend from the heaven and another will ascend to heaven until the Resurrection Day."

The narrator asked: "What buq'a?" The Imam answered: "In the land of Tus. By God, it is a garden of the gardens of Paradise; whoever visits me in that buq'a is like the one who has visited the Apostle of Allah (S) and God will grant them the reward of a thousand proper Hajj pilgrimages and a thousand accepted 'Umra pilgrimages; and, I and my forefathers will intercede with Allah on their behalf on the Day of Resurrection.

Imam al-Musa b. Ja'far (a.s.) said, "My son, 'Ali, will be poisoned to death and buried next to Harun; whoever visits him is like the one who has visited the Prophet (S).

Reward of the Martyrs

Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.) said in a hadith: "Whoever visits him – Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) – while recognizing his rightfulness, the Exalted

Allah will grant them the reward of seventy martyrs from among those truly martyred in front of the Apostle of Allah (S).

Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) said, "By Allah, there is no one among us who will not be killed or martyred." Aba Salt asked: "Who will kill you O son of the Apostle of Allah (S)?"

The Imam answered: "The worst of God's creatures in my time, and will bury me in a dark room and a strange land. Know that whoever visits me in my desolation, the Almighty and Glorious Allah will reward them with the reward of a thousand martyrs, and a thousand truthful ones, a thousand Hajj and 'Umra pilgrimages, and a thousand combats, and He will raise him with us and he will be with us in the highest positions of Paradise.

The Pilgrims of God

Imam Musa b. Ja'far said, "Whoever visits the tomb of my son, 'Ali, in the sight of Allah they are like the ones who have performed seventy proper Hajj pilgrimages." The narrator asked: "Seventy Hajj pilgrimage?" The Imam said, "Yes, and seven thousand Hajj pilgrimages." The narrator asked surprisingly: "Seven thousand?" The Imam said, "Many are the Hajj pilgrimages that are not accepted; whoever visits him and stays with him (near his tomb) for one night, is like the one who visits God in the Divine Throne ('Arsh).

The Fulfiller of Needs and Remover of Sorrows

The Prophet (S) said, "Soon, a part of my body will be buried in Khurasan; no sorrowful one would visit him, except that Allah would remove his sorrow and

".no sinful person would visit him except that Allah would forgive their sins

Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) said, "Whoever has a request from God, should perform ghusl and visit the tomb of my ancestor al-Ridha (a.s.) and say two rak'as of prayer at the upper part of his tomb and ask in the qunut(١) what they want from God; if they do so, their prayer will be answered, provided that they do not commit any sins and do not break .off the ties of kinship

Verily his mausoleum is a chamber of the chambers of Paradise. No believer would make a pilgrimage to it except that Allah would release them from the Fire and enters .them to a safe place

Better than Optional Hajj

Ahmad b. Muhammad al-Bazanti said, "I read in a hand-writing by Imam al-Ridha (a.s.): Convey this message to our Shi'as that visiting me (pilgrimage to my tomb) ".would equal a thousand Hajj pilgrimages in the sight of Allah

Bazanti said, "I said to Imam al-Jawad (a.s.): a thousand Hajj pilgrimages?" His holiness said, "Yes, by God, reward of a thousand (a million) Hajj pilgrimages are for .the one who visits him while recognizing his rightfulness

It is related in another tradition from Imam al-Kazim (a.s.): "Whoever visits my son's ".tomb will be rewarded with seven thousand Hajj pilgrimages

It is related in a tradition from Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) who said, "Allah would write the reward of a thousand proper Hajj pilgrimages and a thousand accepted 'Umra pilgrimages (for my pilgrims)." Yet, in another tradition he

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١- A prayer said after the second rak'a while both hands are raised.

is quoted as saying: “Whoever visits me in my desolation, Allah will write for him the ”.reward of a thousand Hajj and ‘Umra pilgrimages

I (the author) believe that perhaps this difference in reward is due to the difference in the pilgrimages in terms of easiness or difficulty, sincerity and devotion, and the .difference in the excellences and attainments of the pilgrims

Secure from the Fire

Imam al-Jawad (a.s.) said, “Between the two mountains of Tus there lies a piece of land from the lands of Paradise; whoever enters there will be secure from Fire on the .Resurrection Day

In another tradition he said, “Whoever visits my father’s tomb in Tus, Allah will forgive his past and future sins and will set up a minbar (pulpit) across from the minbar of the .Apostle of Allah (S), until He is finished with His judgments on people

Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) said, “Whoever visits me while being far away from home, I will come to them on three occasions on the Day of Resurrection to relieve them from the horrors of that Day: when records of deeds are giving to the left and right hands; at .(the Sirat (the bridge over Hell leading to Paradise) and at the Mizan (Balance

Best of Allah’s Guests

Imam Musa b. al-Ja‘far (a.s.) is quoted as saying: “When the Day of Resurrection comes, four people from among the earlier ones and four people from among the latter ones will be upon the Throne; the four from the earlier will be: Noah, Ibrahim, Moses, and Jesus (peace be upon them); and

the four from among the latter will be: Muhammad (S), ‘Ali, al-Hasan, and al-Husayn ”.(.(a.s

Then, he went on to say: “The pilgrims of the tombs of the Imams (a.s.) will be with us. Know that the pilgrims of the tomb of my son, (al-Ridha – a.s.), will enjoy the highest ”.rank

Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) said, “I will be killed wrongfully with poison and buried next to Harun. God will make my grave the frequenting place of my Shi‘as and visitors; ”.whoever visits me in my desolation, I will pay a visit to them on the Resurrection Day

I swear by the One who honored Muhammad (S) with Prophethood and chose him“ over all His creatures that no one of you will perform prayers next to my grave except ”.that they will deserve forgiveness when meeting with God

I swear by the One who honored us with Imamate after the Prophet (S) and gave us“ superiority in succession that the visitors to my grave are indeed the best of the ”.Exalted Allah’s guests on the Resurrection Day

(.In the Same Rank as the Imam (a.s

Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) said, “Days and nights will not pass until Tus will become the frequenting place of my Shi‘as and visitors. Let it be known that whoever visits me in ”.my desolation, will be in the same rank as me on the Resurrection Day

In another tradition, he stated: “Whoever visits me in my desolation, will be resurrected in our company and will be our companion in higher stations of the ”.Paradise

(.The Pilgrim of Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) and Imam al-Husayn (a.s

Ali b. Mahziyar said, “I said‘

to Imam al-Jawad (a.s.): May I be your ransom! Is pilgrimage to Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) ?(.more preferable or the pilgrimage to Aba ‘Abd Allah al-Husayn (a.s

His holiness answered: Pilgrimage to my father is more preferable, because all (Muslims) make pilgrimage to Aba ‘Abd Allah al-Husayn (a.s.), whereas no one but the ”.elite among the Shi‘as will make pilgrimage to my father

Abd al-‘Azim al-Hasani – may Allah be pleased with him – said, “I said to Imam al-‘ Jawad (a.s.): I am bewildered between pilgrimage to Aba ‘Abd Allah al-Husayn’s (a.s.) ?grave and that of your father in Tus, what do you suggest

His holiness stated: Wait here. Then he went in (a room); when he returned, while tears were rolling down his cheeks, he said, Pilgrims to Aba ‘Abd Allah al-Husayn (a.s.) ”.are many, whereas pilgrims to my father’s grave in Tus are few

The author says: “By the grace of Allah and the blessing of the Ahl al-Bayt (a.s.), today the esteemed nation and the lovers of Ahl al-Bayt (a.s.) in Iran turn caringly and enthusiastically around the radiant mausoleum of Imam al-Ridha (a.s.), displaying their zealous interest in the Ahl al-Bayt (a.s.), to the extent that there are fewer mausoleums today that are rival in grandeur to the Holy Shrine of Imam al-Ridha .(.(a.s

The High Value of Enduring Hardship on the Way to Pilgrimage

His holiness, Imam al-Jawad (a.s.) stated: “No one will visit my father, tolerating hardships such as rain, cold, or heat, except that Allah will make his body forbidden to ”.the Hell-fire

His holiness Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) stated: “The

people of Qum and the people of Abe(1) are forbidden (have found salvation) because they make pilgrimage to my great grandfather's grave; let it be known that whoever visits him and undergoes suffering as little as a raindrop on his way to that visitation, Allah will make Hell-fire forbidden to their body."

Similarly, Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) stated: "No believer will visit me while a raindrop strikes them, except that Allah will make their body forbidden to the Hell-fire."(2)

Some of Imam al-Ridha's (a.s.) Words of Wisdom

point

- Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) said, "Cleanliness is a character of the Prophets."

- Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) said, "When Allah wants to do something, He will take people's intellect away from them; and when he does what He wants to do and carries out what He wills, He will then return the intellect of every intellectual; they will say: How did it happen and where from did it come?"

- Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) said, "Silence brings about affection and is the guide to any felicity."

- Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) said, "Everyone's friend is their intellect and their enemy is their ignorance."

- Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) said, "The reward for the one who is seeking livelihood to protect their family is higher than the struggler in the way of Allah."

- Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) said, "The generous person eats from other people's food so that they may eat from their food, as well; whereas a miserly person avoids eating from others' food so that they would not eat from their food, either."

- Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) said, "There

Also known as Aveh, a village near Saveh in central Iran whose people are Shiʽa -١
.((See Muʽjam al-Buldan, vol. ١, p. ٥۶

The traditions on Imam al-Ridha's (a.s.) excellences are all quoted from the noble -٢
.volume Wasa'il al-Shiʽa, vol. ١٠, chapter ٨٢ up to chapter ٨٨, Abwab al-Mazar

will come a day for the people when prosperity has ten parts, nine parts of which are ”.in seclusion from people and one is in silence

Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) said, “Your assistance to the disabled is preferable to giving • ”.alms

Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) said, “No one will achieve true faith unless there are three • features in him: appreciation of religion; proper planning for livelihood; and ”.perseverance in hardships

Ali b. Shuʽayb said, “I went to Imam al-Ridha (a.s.). He asked me: ‘O ‘Ali, whose life is‘ • better than the others?’ I said, ‘O my master, you know better. He said, The one along ”.’whose life other people may live a happy life

Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) said, “No one will step on the path of contentment except two • [types of people]: the pious person who seeks the Hereafter reward; and the noble ”.person who avoids the mean people

Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) said, “There are seven things which without seven other things • :are frivolous

Those who ask for God’s forgiveness with the tongue but their heart is not • .repentant have ridiculed themselves

Those who ask God for success but do not struggle for it have ridiculed • .themselves

Those who want to be prudent but do not practice abstinence have ridiculed • .themselves

Those who ask God for Paradise but do not forebear hardships have ridiculed • .themselves

Those who take refuge in God from the Hell-fire but do not abandon lusts have • .ridiculed themselves

- Those who remember God

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.but do not hasten to meet Him have ridiculed themselves

- Those who call death to mind but do not prepare for it have ridiculed (themselves.(1)

- Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) said, “The closest position of a servant to the Almighty and Glorious Allah is when they are in prostration; and that is where Allah says:

(prostrate and draw near [to Allah] (Q. ۹۶: ۱۹).(۲)

Punishment of the Impious and Unrestrained Women on the Day of Resurrection

۱۴. Shaykh al-Saduq (may God have mercy on him) is reported to have said on the authority of Imam al-Jawad (a.s.) on the authority of his noble father, Imam al-Ridha (a.s.), on the authority of his noble forefathers that Commander of the Faithful ‘Ali (a.s.) stated:

Fatima (a.s.) and I went to see the Apostle of Allah (S) and saw that his holiness was crying hard. I said, “May my father and mother be your ransom, O Rasul Allah! What has made you cry so hard?”

The Prophet (S) said, “O Ali! On the night of Ascension (Mi’raj), when I was taken up in the heavens, I saw women from among my nation who were being severely tormented. It was really hard on me; so I cried due to the severity of their punishment which I saw with my own eyes then.

I saw a woman hung up by her hair. Her brain was boiling.

I saw another woman who was hung up by her tongue and fire was being poured into her throat.

I saw another woman who was hung up by her breasts.

I saw another one who was eating her

۱- Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۷۵, p. ۳۵۶. However, hadith No. ۷ is not in Bihar al-Anwar; it is adopted from Karajaki’s Ma‘dan al-Jawahir. Meanwhile, all of the traditions quoted from Bihar al-Anwar, are from vol. ۷۵, chapter on Imam al-Ridha’s (a.s.) Preaches.

۲- Uyun Akhbar al-Ridha (a.s.), vol. ۲, p. ۷‘.

.own flesh, while there was a blazing fire beneath her

I saw another woman whose hands and feet were in chains and snakes and scorpions .were all over her

I saw another woman who was deaf, dumb and blind. She was in a coffin filled with fire and her brain was flowing out of her nose. All her body was torn into pieces due to .leprosy

.I saw another woman hung up by her feet in a fire furnace

I saw another woman whose flesh was being cut from the front and the back by .scissors made of fire

I saw another woman whose face and hands were on fire while she was eating her .own intestines

I saw another woman whose head was like the head of a pig and her body was like .the body of a donkey

I saw another woman who looked like a dog and fire was entering her from the back and leaving from her mouth, while the angels were beating her on the head and the ".body with fire clubs

Her holiness Fatima (a.s.) stated: "O my beloved! O the sight of my eyes! Tell me, what "?had they done that Allah inflicted such punishments on them

The Prophet (S) said, "The woman who was hung up by the hair was one who did not .(cover up her hair from strange men (other than their next of kin or close relatives

The woman hung up by the tongue was one who used to harass her husband with her .tongue

The woman hung up by

.her breasts was the one who refused to sleep with her husband

The woman hung up by her feet was one who left the house without her husband's .permission

.The woman who ate her own flesh was one who made herself up for people

The woman whose hands and feet were chained up, and snakes and scorpions covered her up was a woman who did not perform her ablutions properly, did not clean the impurities from her clothes, did not perform the major ritual ablution (ghusl) after intercourse and menstruation, did not purify herself, and did not pay any .attention to her prayers

The woman who was deaf, dumb, and blind was a woman who got pregnant by a man .other than her husband, and associated the child with her own husband

The woman whose flesh was being cut by scissors made of fire was a woman who .submitted herself to unfamiliar men

The woman whose face and head was covered by fire and was eating her own .intestines was a female pimp

The woman whose face was like that of a dog and fire was entering her from the back ".and was leaving from her mouth was a singer, hired mourner, and jealous

Then, the Prophet (S) said, "Woe be to a woman who makes her husband angry! (Blessed be a woman who pleases her husband!"(۱

Reward for Goodness

:Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) stated .۱۵

A man from among the Children of Israel killed one of his relatives. He then took the" corpse and put it along the path of one of the

.Uyun Akhbar al-Ridha (a.s.), vol. ٢, pp. ٩-١١٤ -١

.noblest of the offspring of Israel and then demanded blood money

The people told Moses (a.s.): Such and such a tribe has killed so and so. Tell us who .has killed the man

Then Moses (a.s.) said, Bring me a cow. They said, (Do you take us in derision?) Moses (a.s.) said, (I seek Allah's protection lest I should be one of the senseless!) The Imam (a.s.) added: Had they brought forth a cow, it would suffice and the killer would .have been found

But they were stern, so God was stern with them. (They said, Invoke your Lord for us that He may clarify for us what she may be. He said, He says: She is a cow, neither old nor young, of a middle age.) Had they brought forth a cow – middle age – it would .suffice and the killer would have been found

But they were stern, so God was stern on them, (They said," Invoke your Lord for us, that He may clarify for us what her color may be. He said, He says: She is a cow that is yellow, of a bright hue, pleasing to the onlookers.) Had they brought forth a heifer – yellow, of a bright hue – it would suffice and the killer would have been found. But .they were stern, so God was stern with them

They said, Invoke your Lord for us that He may clarify for us what she may be.(Indeed all cows are much alike

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to us, and, if Allah wishes, we will surely be guided. He said, He says: She is a cow not broken to till the earth or to water the tillage, sound and without blemish. They said,) !Now have you come up with the truth

Then they looked for such a cow and found one belonging to a young man from the Israelites. However, the young man said, I will not sell it unless you fill its skin with gold for me as the price. The Children of Israel went to Moses (a.s.) and asked him .about that. Moses (a.s.) said, You have no choice but to buy it

Thus, they bought it and took it to Moses (a.s.). Moses (a.s.) ordered that the cow be slaughtered. Then he ordered that they hit the corpse of the dead person with the cow's tail. When they did so, the dead man became alive and said, O Messenger of (God! My cousin killed me, not the one who has been accused. (See Qur'an: ۲/۶۶-۷۳

Then Moses (a.s.) told some of his companions: There is an interesting story about this cow. They asked: What is it? Moses (a.s.) said, One of the young men from the .Children of Israel was very kind to his father

Once he bought a small calf and took it home. His father was asleep and the key (to the cowshed) was under his head. The young man did not wake him up (out of respect for him), and just let

.the calf go

When his father woke up and heard the story, he admired his son, gave him a cow and told him: Take this heifer instead." Then Moses (a.s.) added: "Thus, look and see (how far a good deed will take its doer."(١)

That is because it was this cow that was sold at a high price, and the young man) attained the good of this world and the next by doing good to his father. It was as though Divine providence ordained that the young man achieved his reward in the (.world through the Israelites' fault-finding

O Allah! Grant peace and blessing upon 'Ali b. Musa al-Ridha, the chosen one; the pious and the pure Imam; and Thy sign for the people on the surface of the earth and beneath the soil; the truthful, the witness; peace and blessings plentiful, complete, pure, consecutive, successive, uninterrupted; best of peace and blessing that Thou .hast granted upon each one of Thy saints

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.Uyun Akhbar al-Ridha (a.s.), vol. ٢, p. ١٣٤ -١

About center

In the name of Allah

هَلْيَسْتَوِيالَّذِينَيَعْلَمُونَوَالَّذِينَلَايَعْلَمُونَ

?Are those who know equal to those who do not know

al-Zumar: ٩

:Introduction

Ghaemiyeh Computer Research Institute of Isfahan, from ٢٠٠٧, under the authority of Ayatollah Haj SayyedHasanFaqihImami (God blesses his soul), by sincere and daily efforts of university and seminary elites and sophisticated groups began its activities .in religious, cultural and scientific fields

:Manifesto

Ghaemiyeh Computer Research Institute of Isfahan in order to facilitate and accelerate the accessibility of researchers to the books and tools of research, in the field of Islamic science, and regarding the multiplicity and dispersion of active centers in this field

and numerous and inaccessible sources by a mere scientific intention and far from any kind of social, political, tribal and personal prejudices and currents, based on performing a project in the shape of (management of produced and published works from all Shia centers) tries to provide a rich and free collection of books and research papers for the experts, and helpful contents and discussions for the educated generation and all classes of people interested in reading, with various formats in the .cyberspace

:Our Goals are

(propagating the culture and teachings of Thaqalayn (Quran and Ahlulbayt p.b.u.t-

encouraging the populace particularly the youth in investigating the religious issues-

replacing useful contents with useless ones in the cellphones, tablets and computers-

providing services for seminary and university researchers-

spreading culture study in the publich-

paving the way for the publications and authors to digitize their works-

:Policies

acting according to the legal licenses-

relationship with similar centers-

avoiding parallel working-

merely presenting scientific contents-

mentioning the sources-

.It's obvious that all the responsibilities are due to the author

:Other activities of the institute

Publication of books, booklets and other editions-

Holding book reading competitions-

Producing virtual, three dimensional exhibitions, panoramas of religious and tourism- places

.Producing animations, computer games and etc-

Launching the website with this address: www.ghaemiyeh.com-

Fabricatingdramatic and speech works-

Launching the system of answering religious, ethical and doctrinal questions-

Designing systems of accounting, media and mobile, automatic and handy systems,- web kiosks

Holding virtual educational courses for the public-

Holding virtual teacher-training courses-

Producing thousands of research software in three languages (Persian, Arabic and- English) which can be performed in computers, tablets and cellphones and available and downloadable with eight international formats: JAVA, ANDROID, EPUB, CHM, PDF, HTML, CHM, GHB on the website

Also producing four markets named "Ghaemiyeh Book Market" with Android, IOS,- WINDOWS PHONE and WINDOWS editions

:Appreciation

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